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THE

BRITISH THEATRE;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XIII.

LOVE FOR LOVE.
MOURNING BRIDE.
MAHOMET.
TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.
SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1808.

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WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
BEDFORD BURY.

LOVE FOR LOVE

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By WILLIAM CONGREVE, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

COVENT GARDEN AND DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS.

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

REMARKS.

The celebrated author of this comedy was descended from a family of such antiquity, as to have their line extended beyond the Norman Conquest.

It is a subject of dispute, whether Congreve was born in England or Ireland; but it is certain, that he received his education in the last named kingdom. His father, having a commission in the army, on the Irish establishment, placed him when young at the great school of Kilkenny; and afterwards in the university of Dublin, under the direction of Dr. Ash.

Soon after the revolution young Congreve was sent to England, and became a student in the Temple. But instead of close application to the study of the law, he wrote a novel. This production was entitled "Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled;" and some of his biographers speak of it with high encomium. But as the work has not received the honours of preservation, the authority for eulogium may be called in question.

The author's first drama was performed in 1692, when he was no more than twenty-one years of age. The stage was the sphere in which his genius was

destined to shine, and the most complete success attended his play of "The Old Bachelor."

The work had been previously shown to Dryden and Southern, who had both given favourable opinions of it, and prophetic of the author's fame. Yet it is said to have been the mere product of some tedious weeks after a severe illness.

The next year Congreve, elated with praise, brought his "Double Dealer" on the stage; but with less success than his former play. Praise is the parent of security, which, too frequently, gives birth to negligence. But the audience was here to blame, and not the author, for they preferred the inferior drama.

In 1695 was produced "Love for Love," at a new theatre, (built in Lincoln's Inn Fields) upon the very first night of its opening.

This comedy was received with such rapturous applause, and so enriched the managers by its attraction, that they made an overture to the author to give him a share in the annual profits of their house, provided he would furnish them with a play annually.

These conditions were agreed to, but never fulfilled on the part of Congreve. He valued his reputation above his compact, and risked the forfeiture of the one, rather than the loss of the other. Lord Halifax, the Mæcenas of the day, in order to protect the author of "Love for Love" from the danger, and the misery of writing against his inclination for the sake of pecuniary reward, now progressively bestowed on him the place of commissioner for licensing hackney-coaches; a place in the pipe office; a post in the customs; and made him commissioner of wine licenses,

All those posts and places made Congreve opulent; and yet the name of that great poet seems to decline into insignificance, united with the sound of such employments!

Were the characters in "Love for Love" as natural, and as edifying as they are witty, it would be a perfect composition: but the conversation of many of the persons of this drama is either so immoral, or so tinctured with their occupations or propensities, that no such people now exist, and it is to be supposed, never, at any period, existed.

The presiding quality of characters may be too closely adhered to, as well as too much neglected by an author. Men love, in general, to appear that, which they are not—but as their peculiar tempers or callings are no doubt, at times, discoverable either in their language or manners, such peculiarities, to appear natural in imitation, should only be resorted to occasionally.

It were indeed to be wished, that wicked men, like the men in this comedy, would hold discourse according to their evil natures; that the innocent and the unwary might know whom to shun—but to seem virtuous, is the usual design of people devoted to vice.

From the charge of conspicuous faults or singularities, the author has, however, exempted his two sincere lovers. For though Valentine and Angelica are both somewhat too gay to be good, yet compared with the company they keep, they are most respectable personages.

Dr. Johnson has so pointedly censured the impro-

bability of a marriage contracted under a mask (an ncident which occurs in most, if not all, of Con- greve's plays), that any additional remark on that subject would be superfluous; and, when all the im- perfections of "Love for Love" are summed up, there still remains a balance of entertainment so de- lectable, that it pleases at the present era as it did at the past, and will continue its attractions as long as wit, or a theatre shall charm.

Idolized as this author was for his dramatic genius, he retired from the pursuit of fame to a country life, instigated by a jealousy of Mrs. Centlivre's superior influence with the town as a dramatist.

The last action of Congreve's life was more re- proachable than this—he bequeathed the fortune he had accumulated to the Duchess of Marlborough, leaving many of his own ancient family in disap- pointment and poverty.

This death-bed vanity and injustice was no im- pediment to his being buried in Westminster Abbey; nor to his lying in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, previous to his interment; it might, possibly, assist the grandeur of his funeral obsequies.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	COVENT GARDEN.	DRURY LANE.
SIR SAMPSON LEGEND	*Mr. Emery.*	*Mr. Dowton.*
VALENTINE	*Mr. C. Kemble.*	*Mr. Elliston.*
SCANDAL	*Mr. Brunton.*	*Mr. Barrymore,*
TATTLE	*Mr. Lewis.*	*Mr. Palmer.*
BEN	*Mr. Fawcett.*	*Mr. Bannister.*
FORESIGHT	*Mr. Munden.*	*Mr. Matthews.*
JEREMY	*Mr. Farley.*	*Mr. De Camp.*
TRAPLAND	*Mr. Wilde.*	*Mr. Purser.*
SNAP	*Mr. Field.*	*Mr. Sparks.*
ANGELICA	*Mrs. Glover.*	*Miss Duncan.*
MRS. FORESIGHT	*Mrs. Humphries.*	*Mrs. Johnstone.*
MRS. FRAIL	*Mrs. Litchfield.*	*Miss Pope.*
MISS PRUE	*Mrs. Gibbs.*	*Mrs. Jordan.*
NURSE	*Mrs. Emery.*	*Mrs. Sparks.*
JENNY	*Miss Frederick.*	*Mrs. Jones.*

SCENE—London.

LOVE FOR LOVE

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

VALENTINE'S *Lodgings.*

VALENTINE *discovered reading;* JEREMY *waiting. Several Books upon the Table.*

Val. Jeremy!

Jer. Sir.

Val. Here, take away; I'll walk a turn, and digest what I have read. [*Rises.*

Jer. You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet! [*Aside, and taking away the Books.*

Val. And, d'ye hear? go you to breakfast—There's a page doubled down in Epictetus, that is a feast for an emperor.

Jer. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?

Val. Read, read, sirrah, and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh. Read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding. So Epictetus advises,

Jer. O lord! I have heard much of him, when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. Pray what was that Epictetus?

Val. A very rich man—not worth a groat.

Jer. Humph! and so he has made a very fine feast, where there is nothing to be eaten?

Val. Yes.

Jer. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding: but, if you please, I had rather be at board-wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and lived in a tub, go to prison for you? 'Slife, sir, what do you mean, to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving and poverty?

Val. Why, sirrah, I have no money, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have: and in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages—these poets and philosophers, whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason; because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

Jer. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it; and yet, Heaven help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit.—But I was always a fool, when I told you what your expenses would bring you to; your coaches and your liveries; your treats and your balls; your being in love with a lady, that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits, that cared for nothing but your prosperity, and now when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

Val. Well! and now I am poor, I have an opportunity to be revenged on them all; I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more no-

toriously her admirer in this restraint, than when I openly rivaled the rich fops that made court to her. So shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and perhaps make her compassionate the love, which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them. [*Sits.*

Jer. Nay, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

Val. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

Jer. Now Heaven of mercy continue the tax upon paper!—You don't mean to write?

Val. Yes, I do; I'll write a play.

Jer. Hem! Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines—only to certify those whom it may concern, That the bearer hereof, Jeremy Fetch, by name, has for the space of seven years truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esquire; and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanor, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him—

Val. No, sirrah; you shall live with me still.

Jer. Sir, it's impossible—I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works: but to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it, than to be canonized for a muse after my decease.

Val. You are witty, you rogue, I shall want your help—I'll have you learn to make couplets, to tag to the ends of acts. D'ye hear? get the maids to crambo in an evening, and learn the knack of rhyming; you may arrive at the height of a song sent by an unknown hand, or a chocolate-house lampoon.

Jer. But, sir, is this the way to recover your father's favour? Why Sir Sampson will be irreconcileable. If your younger brother should come from sea, he'd never look upon you again. You're undone, sir; you're ruined; you won't have a friend left in

the world, if you turn poet: I never think of the trade but the spirit of famine appears to me—sometimes like a decayed porter, worn out with pimping, and carrying billet-doux and songs; not like other porters, for hire, but for the jest's sake.—Now like a thin chairman, melted down to half his proportion, with carrying a poet upon tick, to visit some great fortune; and his fare to be paid him, like the wages of sin, either at the day of marriage, or the day of death.

Enter SCANDAL.

Scand. What! Jeremy holding forth?

Val. The rogue has (with all the wit he could muster up) been declaiming against wit.

Scand. Ay! Why then I'm afraid Jeremy has wit: for wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

Jer. Why so I have been telling my master, sir. Mr. Scandal, for Heaven's sake, sir, try if you can dissuade him from turning poet.

Scand. Poet! he shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head, than the lining! Why, what the devil! has not your poverty made you enemies enough? must you needs show your wit to get more?

Jer. Ay, more indeed: for who cares for any body that has more wit than himself?

Scand. Jeremy speaks like an oracle. Don't you see how worthless great men and dull rich rogues avoid a witty man of small fortune? Why he looks like a writ of inquiry into their titles and estates; and seems commissioned by Heaven to seize the better half.

Val. Therefore I would rail in my writings, and be revenged. [*Rises.*

Scand. Rail! at whom? the whole world? Impotent and vain! Who would die a martyr to sense, in a country where religion is folly? You may stand at bay for a while; but, when the full cry is against

you, you sha'nt have fair play for your life. If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsman.—No, turn flatterer, quack, lawyer, any thing but poet: a modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous, and fawning, than any I have named: without you could retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recall the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open honest satire.

Val. You are as inveterate against our poets, as if your character had been lately exposed upon the stage.—Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.—[*A Knock.*] Jeremy, see who's there. [*Exit* JEREMY.] But tell me what you would have me do?—What do the world say of me, and my forced confinement?

Scand. The world behaves itself, as it uses to do on such occasions. Some pity you, and condemn your father: others excuse him, and blame you. Only the ladies are merciful, and wish you well: since love and pleasurable expense have been your greatest faults.

Enter JEREMY.

Val. How now?

Jer. Nothing new, sir. I have despatched some half a dozen duns with as much dexterity as an hungry judge does causes at dinner-time.

Val. What answer have you given them?

Scand. Patience, I suppose—the old receipt!

Jer. No, faith, sir: I have put them off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forced to tell them in plain downright English—

Val. What?

Jer. That they should be paid.

Val. When?

Jer. To-morrow.

Val. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

Jer. Keep it? not at all: it has been so very much stretched, that I reckon it will break of course by to-morrow, and nobody be surprised at the matter!—[*Knocking.*]—Again! Sir, if you don't like my negociation, will you be pleased to answer these yourself?

Val. See who they are. [*Exit* JEREMY.] By this, Scandal, you may see what it is to be great. Secretaries of state, presidents of the council, and generals of an army, lead just such a life as I do; have just such crowds of visitants in a morning, all soliciting of past promises; which are but a civiler sort of duns, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. O, sir, there's Trapland, the scrivener, with two suspicious fellows, like lawful footpads, that would knock a man down with pocket tipstaves!—— And there's your father's steward; and the nurse, with one of your children, from Twit'nam.

Val. Plague on her! could she find no other time to fling my sins in my face? Here! give her this, [*Gives Money.*] and bid her trouble me no more; bid Mr. Trapland come in. If I can give that Cerberus a sop, I shall be at rest for one day.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Enter JEREMY *and* TRAPLAND.

O, Mr. Trapland! my old friend, welcome! Jeremy, a chair quickly: a bottle of sack and a toast —fly—a chair first. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Trapl. A good morning to you, Mr. Valentine; and to you, Mr. Scandal.

Scand. The morning's a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

Val. Come, sit you down: you know his way.

Trapl. [*Sits.*] There is a debt, Mr. Valentine, of fifteen hundred pounds, of pretty long standing—

Val. I cannot talk about business, with a thirsty palate.—Sirrah! the sack!

Enter JEREMY *with Wine, &c.*

Trapl. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment.

Val. Faith and troth, I am heartily glad to see you.—My service to you! fill, fill, to honest Mr. Trapland—fuller!

Trapl. Hold! sweetheart—this is not to our business.—My service to you, Mr. Scandal!—[*Drinks.*] ——I have forborne as long—

Val. T'other glass, and then we'll talk.—Fill, Jeremy.

Trapl. No more, in truth—I have forborne, I say—

Val. And how does your handsome daughter?—Come, a good husband to her. [*Drinks.*

Trapl. Thank you—I have been out of this money—

Val. Drink first. Scandal, why do you not drink? [*They drink.*

Trapl. And, in short, I can be put off no longer.

Val. I was much obliged to you for your supply; it did me signal service in my necessity. But you delight in doing good. Scandal, drink to me, my friend Trapland's health. An honester man lives not, nor one more ready to serve his friend in distress; though I say it to his face. Come, fill each man his glass.

Scand. What? I know Trapland has been a wencher, and loves a girl still. You never knew a wencher, that was not an honest fellow.

Trapl. Fie, Mr. Scandal, you never knew!—

Scand. What don't I know?——I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry—Eight hundred pounds a-year jointure, and twenty thousand pounds in money. Ahah! old Trap!

Val. Say you so, i'faith? Come, we'll remember the widow: I know whereabouts you are; come, to the widow.

Trapl. No more, indeed.

Val. What! the widow's health? off with it. [*They drink.*]—A lovely girl, i'faith, black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips! Better sealing there, than a bond for a million, ha!

Trapl. Ha! ha! ha! Verily, give me a glass—you're a wag—and here's to the widow. [*Drinks.*

Scand. He begins to chuckle—ply him close, or he'll relapse into a dun. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Enter SNAP.

Snap. By your leave, gentlemen.—Mr. Trapland, if we must do our office, tell us.—We have half a dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall-mall and Covent Garden; and if we don't make haste, the chairmen will be abroad, and block up the chocolate-houses; and then our labour's lost.

Enter JEREMY.

Trapl. Odso, that's true. Mr. Valentine, I love mirth; but business must be done; are you ready to——

Jer. Sir, your father's steward says, he comes to make proposals concerning your debts.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Val. Bid him come in: Mr. Trapland, send away your officer; you shall have an answer presently.

Trapl. Mr. Snap, stay within call. [*Exit* SNAP.

Enter JEREMY *and* STEWARD, *who whispers* VALENTINE.

Scand. Here's a dog now, a traitor in his wine; Sirrah, refund the sack; Jeremy, fetch him some

warm water; or I'll rip up his stomach, and go the shortest way to his conscience.

Trapl. Mr. Scandal, you are uncivil. I did not value your sack; but you cannot expect it again, when I have drunk it.

Scand. And how do you expect to have your money again, when a gentleman has spent it?

Val. You need say no more. I understand the conditions; they are very hard, but my necessity is very pressing: I agree to them. Take Mr. Trapland with you, and let him draw the writing.—Mr. Trapland, you know this man; he shall satisfy you.

Trapl. Sincerely, I am loth to be thus pressing; but my necessity—

Val. No apology, Mr. Scrivener; you shall be paid.

Trapl. I hope you forgive me: my business requires——

[*Exeunt* TRAPLAND, STEWARD, *and* JEREMY.

Scand. He begs pardon, like a hangman at an execution.

Val. But I have got a reprieve.

Scand. I am surprised; what, does your father relent?

Val. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world. You have heard of a booby brother of mine, that was sent to sea three years ago? This brother, my father hears, is landed; whereupon he very affectionately sends me word, If I will make a deed of conveyance of my right to his estate after his death to my younger brother, he will immediately furnish me with four thousand pounds, to pay my debts, and make my fortune. This was once proposed before, and I refused it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience of confinement, and absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

Scand. A very desperate demonstration of your love to Angelica! and I think she has never given you any assurance of hers.

Val. You know her temper; she never gave me any great reason either of hope or despair.

Scand. Women of her airy temper, as they seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any light to guess at what they mean. But you have little reason to believe that a woman of this age, who has had an indifference for you in your prosperity, will fall in love with your ill fortune. Besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own; and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. More misfortunes, sir.

Val. What, another dun?

Jer. No, sir; but Mr. Tattle is come to wait upon you.

Val. Well, I can't help it—you must bring him up; he knows I don't go abroad. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Scand. Plague on him, I'll be gone.

Val. No, pr'ythee stay: Tattle and you should never be asunder; you are light and shadow, and show one another. He is perfectly thy reverse, both in humour and understanding; and as you set up for defamation, he is a mender of reputations.

Scand. A mender of reputations! ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper; and deny a woman's name, while he gives you the marks of her person: he will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time, show you her hand in the superscription; and yet, perhaps, he has counterfeited the hand too, and sworn to a truth. In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes proclamation that he holds private intelligence.—He is here.

Enter TATTLE.

Tatt. Valentine, good morrow: Scandal, I am yours—that is, when you speak well of me.

Scand. That is, when I am yours: for while I am my own, or any body's else, that will never happen.

Tatt. How inhuman!

Val. Why, Tattle, you need not be much concerned at any thing that he says: for to converse with Scandal, is to play at Losing Loadum; you must lose a good name to him, before you can win it for yourself.

Tatt. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person for his calumniation!—I thank Heaven, it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputations of others very tenderly indeed.

Scand. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with are to be handled tenderly indeed.

Tatt. Nay, why rotten? why should you say rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!

Scand. Not know them? Why, thou never hadst to do with any one that was not common to all the town.

Tatt. Ha! ha! ha! nay, now you make a jest of it indeed. For there is nothing more known, than that nobody knows any thing of that nature of me. As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman, since I knew what woman was.

Val. And yet you have conversed with several?

Tatt. To be free with you, I have—I don't care if I own that—nay, more (I'm going to say a bold word now,) I never could meddle with a woman, that had to do with any body else.

Scand. How!

Val. Nay, faith, I'm apt to believe him—except her husband, Tattle.

Tatt. Oh that—

Scand. What think you of that noble commoner, Mrs. Drab?

Tatt. Pooh, I know Madam Drab has made her brags in three or four places, that I said this and that, and writ to her, and did I know not what—but, upon my reputation, she did me wrong—well, well, that was malice—but I know the bottom of it. She was bribed to that by one we all know—a man too—only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality—

Scand. Whom we all know.

Tatt. No matter for that—Yes, yes, every body knows—no doubt on't, every body knows my secrets! —But I soon satisfied the lady of my innocence; for I told her—Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and the other, and every thing in the world; and, says I, if your grace——

Scand. Grace!

Tatt. O lord, what have I said?——My unlucky tongue!

Val. Ha! ha! ha!

Scand. Why, Tattle, thou hast more impudence than one can in reason expect: I shall have an esteem for thee—Well, and ha! ha! ha! well, go on, and what did you say to her grace?

Val. I confess this is something extraordinary.

Tatt. Not a word, as I hope to be saved; an arrant *lapsus linguæ!*—Come, let us talk of something else.

Val. Well, but how did you acquit yourself?

Tatt. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all, I only rallied with you.—A woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other, faith, I know not what.—Come, let's talk of something else. [*Hums a Song.*

Scand. Hang him, let him alone; he has a mind we should inquire.

Tatt. Valentine, I supped last night with your mis-

tress, and her uncle, old Foresight: I think your father lies at Foresight's.

Val. Yes.

Tatt. Upon my soul, Angelica's a fine woman.—And so is Mrs. Foresight, and her sister, Mrs. Frail.

Scand. Yes, Mrs. Frail is a very fine woman; we all know her.

Tatt. O, that is not fair.

Scand. What?

Tatt. To tell.

Scand. To tell what? Why, what do you know of Mrs. Frail?

Tatt. Who, I? Upon honour I don't know whether she be a man or woman; but by the smoothness of her chin, and roundness of her hips.

Scand. No!

Tatt. No.

Scand. She says otherwise.

Tatt. Impossible!

Scand. Yes, faith. Ask Valentine else.

Tatt. Why then, as I hope to be saved, I believe a woman only obliges a man to secrecy, that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

Scand. No doubt on it. Well, but has she done you wrong or no? You have succeeded with her, ha?

Tatt. Though I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

Scand. Well, you own it?

Tatt. I am strangely surprised! Yes, yes, I cannot deny it, if she taxes me with it.

Scand. She'll be here by and by; she sees Valentine every morning.

Tatt. How!

Val. She does me the favour—I mean, of a visit

sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to any body.

Scand. Nor I, faith,—But Tattle does not use to belie a lady; it is contrary to his character.—How one may be deceived in a woman, Valentine!

Tatt. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

Scand. I'm resolved I'll ask her.

Tatt. O barbarous! Why, did you not tell me—

Scand. No, you told us.

Tatt. And bid me ask Valentine?

Val. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer, when you never asked me the question!

Tatt. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhuman proceeding——

Val. Nay, if you have known Scandal thus long, and cannot avoid such a palpable decoy as this was; the ladies have a fine time, whose reputations are in your keeping.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, Mrs. Frail has sent to know if you are stirring.

Val. Show her up when she comes.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Tatt. I'll be gone.

Val. You'll meet her.

Tatt. Is there not a back way?

Val. If there were, you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage; why, your running away will prove all that he can tell her.

Tatt. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous—O, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy for ever.—I shall never be received but upon public days; and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing-room: I shall never see a bed-chamber again, never be locked in a closet, nor run behind a screen, or

under a table; never be distinguished among the waiting women by the name of trusty Mr. Tattle more.—You will not be so cruel?

Val. Scandal, have pity on him; he'll yield to any conditions.

Tatt. Any, any terms.

Scand. Come then, sacrifice half a dozen women of good reputation to me presently.——Come, where are you familiar?——And see that they are women of quality too, the first quality.

Tatt. 'Tis very hard.——Won't a baronet's lady pass?

Scand. No, nothing under a right honourable.

Tatt. O inhuman! You don't expect their names?

Scand. No, their titles shall serve.

Tatt. Alas, that is the same thing! Pray spare me their titles; I'll describe their persons.

Scand. Well, begin then. But take notice, if you are so ill a painter, that I cannot know the person by your picture of her, you must be condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

Tatt. Well, first then——

Mrs. Frail. [*Within.*] No, no, bid them wait.

Tatt. O unfortunate! she's come already. Will you have patience till another time?—I'll double the number.

Scand. Well, on that condition—Take heed you don't fail me.

Enter MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. F. I shall get a fine reputation, by coming to see fellows in a morning! Scandal, you devil, are you here too? Oh, Mr. Tattle, every thing is safe with you, we know.

Scand. Tattle!

Tatt. Mum——O madam, you do me too much honour.

Val. Well, Lady Galloper, how does Angelica?

Mrs. F. Angelica?—Manners!

Val. What, you will allow an absent lover—

Mrs. F. No, I'll allow a lover present with his mistress to be particular—but otherwise I think his passion ought to give place to his manners.

Val. But what if he has more passion than manners?

Mrs. F. Then let him marry, and reform.

Val. Marriage, indeed, may qualify the fury of his passion; but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

Mrs. F. You are the most mistaken in the world; there is no creature perfectly civil, but a husband: for in a little time he grows only rude to his wife; and that is the highest good-breeding, for it begets his civility to other people. Well, I'll tell you news; but I suppose you heard your brother Benjamin is landed. And my brother Foresight's daughter is come out of the country—I assure you, there's a match talked of by the old people.—Well, if he be but as great a sea beast, as she is a land monster, we shall have a most amphibious breed—the progeny will be all otters: he has been bred at sea, and she has never been out of the country.

Val. Plague take them! their conjunction bodes no good, I'm sure.

Mrs. F. Now you talk of conjunction, my brother Foresight has cast both their nativities, and prognosticates an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the issue male of their two bodies. 'Tis the most superstitious old fool! He would have persuaded me that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me come abroad: but I invented a dream, and sent him to Artemidorus for interpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? What will you give me, Mr. Tattle?

Tatt. I? My soul, madam.

Mrs. F. Pooh, no, I thank you, I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well; but I'll come and see you one of these mornings: I hear, you have a great many pictures.

Tatt. I have a pretty good collection, at your service; some originals.

Scand. Hang him, he has nothing but the Seasons and the twelve Cæsars, paltry copies; and the Five Senses, as ill represented as they are in himself; and he himself is the only original you will see there.

Mrs. F. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

Scand. Yes, all that have done him favours, if you will believe him.

Mrs. F. Ay! let me see those, Mr. Tattle.

Tatt. Oh, madam, those are sacred to love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself was ever blest with the sight.

Mrs. F. Well, but a woman—

Tatt. Nor woman, till she consented to have her picture there too—for then she is obliged to keep the secret.

Scand. No, no! come to me if you'd see pictures.

Mrs. F. You?

Scand. Yes, faith, I can show you your own picture, and most of your acquaintance, to the life, and as like as at Kneller's.

Mrs. F. O, lying creature!—Valentine, does not he lie?—I can't believe a word he says.

Val. No, indeed he speaks truth now; for, as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favours, he has the pictures of all that have refused him—if satires, characters, and lampoons, are pictures.

Scand. Yes, mine are most in black and white—and yet there are some set out in their true colours,

both men and women. I can show you pride, folly, affectation, wantonness, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice, and ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can show you lying, foppery, vanity, cowardice, bragging, and ugliness, in another piece: and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a professed beau. I have some hieroglyphics too.

Mrs. F. Come, let's hear them.

Scand. I have a lawyer with a hundred hands, two heads, and but one face; a divine, with two faces, and one head; and I have a soldier, with his brains in his belly, and his heart where his head should be.

Tatt. And no head.

Scand. No head.

Mrs. F. Pooh, this is all invention. Well, I'll come, if it be but to disprove you.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, here's the steward again from your father.

Val. I'll come to him. [*Exit* JEREMY.] Will you give me leave? I'll wait on you again presently.

Mrs. F. No, I'll be gone. Come, who squires me to the Exchange? I must call on my sister Foresight there.

Scand. I will: I have a mind to your sister.

Mrs. F. Civil!

Tatt. [*To* MRS. FRAIL.] I will; because I have a *tendre* for your ladyship.

Mrs. F. That's somewhat the better reason, to my opinion. [*Exeunt* MRS. FRAIL *and* TATTLE.

Val. Tell Angelica, I am about making hard conditions, to come abroad, and be at liberty to see her.

Scand. I'll give an account of you and your proceedings. If indiscretion be a sign of love, you are

the most a lover of any body that I know. You fancy that parting with your estate will help you to your mistress—In my mind, he is a thoughtless adventurer,

Who hopes to purchase wealth by selling land;
Or win a mistress with a losing hand. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE 1.

A Room in FORESIGHT'S *House.*

Enter FORESIGHT *and* JAMES.

For. Heyday! What, are all the women of my family abroad? Is not my wife come home? nor my sister? nor my daughter?

James. No, sir.

For. Mercy on us! what can be the meaning of it? Sure the moon is in all her fortitudes! Is my niece Angelica at home?

James. Yes, sir.

For. I believe you lie, sir.

James. Sir?

For. I say, you lie, sir. It is impossible that any thing should be as I would have it; for I was born, sir, when the crab was ascending; and all my affairs go backward,

James. I can't tell, indeed, sir.

For. No, I know you can't, sir. But I can tell, and foretell, sir.

Enter NURSE.

For. Nurse, where's your young mistress?

Nurse. Wee'st heart! I know not; they're none of them come home yet. Poor child, I warrant she's fond of seeing the town!——Marry, pray Heaven they have given her any dinner!——Good lack-a-day, ha! ha! ha! O strange; I'll vow and swear now, ha! ha! ha! marry, and did you ever see the like!

For. Why, how now, what's the matter?

Nurse. Pray Heaven send your worship good luck! marry, and amen, with all my heart! for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

For. Ha, how? Faith and troth, I'm glad of it; and so I have; what may be good luck in troth; in troth it may, very good luck: nay, I have had some omens. I got out of bed backwards too this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that too. But then I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those! Some bad, some good; our lives are chequered; mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time.—But in troth, I am pleased at my stocking—very well pleased at my stocking!—Oh, here's my niece!—Sirrah, go tell Sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him, if he's at leisure. [*Exit* JAMES.] 'Tis now three o'clock, a very good hour for business; Mercury governs this hour.

Enter ANGELICA.

Ang. Is it not a good hour for pleasure too, uncle? Pray lend me your coach; mine's gone to be mended.

For. What, would you be gadding too? Sure all females are mad to-day.—It is of evil portend, and

bodes mischief to the master of a family.—I remember an old prophecy, written by Messahalah the Arabian, and thus translated by a reverend Buckinghamshire bard:

When housewives all the house forsake
And leave good men to brew and bake,
Withouten guile, then be it said,
That house doth stand upon its head;
And when the head is set in ground,
No marl, if it be fruitful found.

Fruitful! the head fruitful! that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns: Dear niece, stay at home—for by the head of the house is meant the husband; the prophecy needs no explanation.

Ang. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going abroad, nor secure you from being one, by staying at home.

For. Yes, yes; while there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

Ang. But my inclinations are in force. I have a mind to go abroad; and if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney, or a chair. Why don't you keep your wife at home, if you are jealous of her when she's abroad? You know my aunt is a little retrograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the ascendant! ha, ha, ha!

For. Well, jill-flirt, you are very pert—and always ridiculing that celestial science.

Ang. Nay, uncle, don't be angry.—If you are, I'll reap up all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations. I'll swear, you are a nuisance to the neighbourhood.—What a bustle did you keep against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision, as it were for a siege! What a world of fire and candle, matches and tinderboxes, did you purchase! One would have thought we were ever after to live

under ground; or at least to make a voyage to Greenland, to inhabit there all the dark season.—Indeed, uncle, I'll indite you for a wizard.

For. How hussy! was there ever such a provoking minx?

Nurse. O merciful father, how she talks!

Ang. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices; you and the old nurse there.

Nurse. Marry, Heaven defend!—I at midnight practices!—O lord, what's here to do?—I in unlawful doings with my master's worship!—Why, did you ever hear the like now?—Sir, did ever I do any thing but warm your bed, and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco-box by you, and now and then rub the soles of your feet?—O lord, I!—

Ang. Yes, I saw you together, through the key-hole of the closet, one night, like Saul and the witch of Endor, turning the sieve and sheers, and pricking your thumbs, to write poor innocent servants names in blood, about a little nutmeg-grater, which she had forgot in the caudle-cup.

For. I defy you, hussy; but I'll remember this. I'll be revenged on you, cockatrice; I'll hamper you—You have your fortune in your own hands—but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for all, I will.—I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars I should be thus tormented—this is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house of my nativity; there the curse of kindred was foretold.—But I will have my doors locked up—I'll punish you; not a man shall enter my house.

Ang. Do, uncle, lock them up quickly, before my aunt comes home—you'll have a letter for alimony to-morrow morning!—But let me be gone first; and then let no mankind come near the house: but converse with spirits and the celestial signs; the bull and the ram, and the goat. Bless me, there are a great

many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle! But cuckholds go to heaven!

For. But there's but one virgin among the twelve signs, spitfire!—but one virgin!

Ang. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with any thing but astrologers, uncle! That makes my aunt go abroad.

For. How! how! is that the reason? Come, you know something; tell me; and I'll forgive you; do, good niece.—Come, you shall have my coach and horses—faith and troth, you shall.—Does my wife complain? Come, I know women tell one another.

Ang. Ha! ha! ha!

For. Do you laugh?—Well, gentlewoman, I'll—But come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle! Tell me—won't you speak? Odd, I'll—

Enter JAMES.

Ser. Sir Sampson is coming to wait upon you, sir. [*Exit.*

Ang. Good b'ye, uncle.—Call me a chair.—I'll find out my aunt, and tell her, she must not come home. [*Exit.*

For. I am so perplexed and vexed, I am not fit to receive him; I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past. Go, Nurse, and bid them tell Sir Sampson, I'm ready to wait on him.

Nurse. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

For. Well—why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said!—He is here already.

Enter Sir SAMPSON LEGEND, *with a Paper.*

Sir S. Nor no more to be done, old boy; that is plain—here it is, I have it in my hand, old Ptolemy; I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What, I warrant, my son thought nothing belonged to a father, but forgiveness and affection; no authority, no correc-

tion, no arbitrary power—nothing to be done, but for him to offend, and me to pardon! I warrant you, if he danced till doomsday, he thought I was to pay the piper. Well, but here it is under black and white, *signatum, sigillatum*, and *deliberatum*—that as soon as my son Benjamin is arrived, he is to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter that is to be—ha! old Merlin? Body of me, I'm so glad I'm revenged on this undutiful rogue!

For. Odso, let me see; let me see the paper.—Ay, faith and troth, here it is, if it will but hold—I wish things were done, and the conveyance made.—When was this signed? what hour? Odso, you should have consulted me for the time. Well, but we'll make haste.

Sir S. Haste! ay, ay, haste enough; my son Ben will be in town to-night—I have ordered my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure—all shall be done to-night.—No matter for the time; pr'ythee, brother Foresight, leave superstition:—there's no time but the time present; there's no more to be said of what's past; and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shine by day, and the stars by night—why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle; and that's all the stars are good for.

For. How, how, Sir Sampson? that all? Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you, you are ignorant.

Sir S. I tell you, I am wise: and *sapiens dominabitur astris;* there's Latin for you, to prove it, and an argument to confound your Ephemeris.—Ignorant!—I tell you, I have travelled, old Fercu: and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes, where the sun rises at midnight, and sets at noon day.

For. But I tell you, I have travelled, and travelled in the celestial spheres; know the signs and the planets, and their houses; can judge of motions di-

rect and retrograde, of sextiles, quadrates, trines and oppositions, fiery trigons, and aquatical trigons; know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy; whether diseases are curable or incurable; if journeys shall be prosperous, undertakings successful, or goods stolen recovered: I know—

Sir S. I know the length of the emperor of China's foot; have kissed the great mogul's slipper, and rid a hunting upon an elephant, with the cham of Tartary.—Body o'me, I have made a cuckold of a king; and the present majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.

For. I know when travellers lie, or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

Sir S. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star.

For. What does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better informed of this. [*Aside.*]—Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet, by the body of the sun—

Sir S. By the horns of the moon, you would say, brother Capricorn.

For. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville; Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences and a defamer of virtue.

Sir S. Body o'me, I have gone too far—I must not provoke honest Albumazar.—An Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic: and may have significations of futurity about him. Odsbud, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for thy sake. What, thou art not angry for a jest, my good Haly?—I reverence the sun, moon, and stars, with all my heart.—What! I'll make thee a

present of a mummy. Now I think on't, body o'me, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king, that I purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered with hieroglyphics; thou shalt have it brought home to thy house, and make an entertainment for all the Philomaths, and students in physic and astrology, in and about London.

For. But what do you know of my wife, Sir Sampson?

Sir S. Thy wife is a constellation of virtues; she is the moon, and thou art the man in the moon; nay, she is more illustrious than the moon; for she has her chastity, without her incontinency: 'sbud, I was but in jest.

Enter JEREMY.

Sir S. How now? who sent for you, ha? what would you have?

For. Nay, if you were but in jest!—Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy.

Sir S. [*To* JEREMY.] My son, sir? what son, sir? my son Benjamin, ha?

Jer. No, sir; Mr. Valentine, my master!—it is the first time he has been abroad since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

Sir S. Well, sir.

Enter VALENTINE.

Jer. He is here, sir.

Val. Your blessing, sir!

Sir S. You've had it already, sir; I think I sent it you to-day, in a bill of four thousand pounds.—A great deal of money, brother Foresight!

For. Ay, indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man; I wonder what he can do with it!

Sir S. Body o'me, so do I.—Harkye, Valentine,

if there be too much, refund the superfluity; dost hear, boy?

Val. Superfluity, sir! it will scarce pay my debts.—I hope you will have more indulgence, than to oblige me to those hard conditions which my necessity signed to.

Sir S. Sir! how, I beseech you, what were you pleased to intimate, concerning indulgence?

Val. Why, sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part.

Sir S. O, sir, I understand you—that's all, ha?

Val. Yes, sir, all that I presume to ask—But what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleased to add, will be doubly welcome.

Sir S. Here's a rogue, brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be released from it in the afternoon! here's a rogue, dog; here's conscience and honesty! This is your wit now, this is the morality of your wit! You are a wit, and have been a beau, and may be a—Why, sirrah, is it not here under hand and seal?—Can you deny it.

Val. Sir, I don't deny it?

Sir S. Sirrah, you'll be hang'd; I shall live to see you go up Holborn Hill.—Has he not a rogue's face?——Speak, brother; you understand physiognomy; a hanging look to me—of all my boys the most unlike me. He has a damned Tyburn face, without the benefit of the clergy.

For. Hum!—truly, I don't care to discourage a young man—he has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

Val. Sir, is this usage for your son?—For that old weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; But you, sir——

Sir S. You, sir; and you, sir.—Why who are you, sir?

Val. Your son, sir.

Sir S. That's more than I know, sir: and I believe not.

Val. Faith, I hope not.

Sir S. What, would you have your mother a whore? Did you ever hear the like; did you ever hear the like? body o'me—

Val. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

Sir S. Excuse?—Impudence! Why, sirrah, mayn't I do what I please? are not you my slave? did not I beget you? and might not I have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? Oons, who are you? whence came you? what brought you into the world? how came you here, sir? here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect, with that audacious face, ha? Answer me that. Did you come a volunteer into the world? or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you to the service?

Val. I know no more why I came, than you do why you called me. But here I am; and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

Sir S. With all my heart. Come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into it.

Val. My clothes are soon put off—but you must also divest me of my reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants that you begot along with me.

Sir S. Body o'me, what a many-headed monster have I propagated!

Val. I am of myself, a plain, easy, simple creature; and to be kept at small expense: but the retinue that you gave me are craving and invincible devils that you have raised, and will have employment.

Sir S. Oons, what had I to do to get children?—can't a private man be born without all these follow-

followers;—Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites—why, at this rate, a fellow that has but a groat in his pocket may have a stomach capable of a ten shilling ordinary.

Jer. Nay, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

Sir S. Here's a cormorant too!—'Sheart, this fellow was not born with you?—I did not beget him, did I?

Jer. By the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me too—Nay, and to tell your worship another truth, I believe you did; for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites too that my master speaks of.

Sir S. Why look you there now!—I'll maintain it, that, by the rule of right reason, this fellow ought to have been born without a palate.—'Sheart, what should he do with a distinguishing taste? I warrant now, he'd rather eat a pheasant, than a piece of poor John—and smell, now; why I warrant he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink—why there's it; and music—don't you love music, scoundrel?

Jer. Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jiggs and country dances, and the like. I don't much matter your solo's or sonata's; they give me the spleen.

Sir S. The spleen! ha! ha! ha! a pox confound you!—Solo's or sonata's? Oons, whose son are you, muckworm?

Jer. I am, by my father, the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer: and I came up stairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

For. By your looks you shall go up stairs out of the world too, friend.

Sir S. And if this rogue were anatomized now, and dissected, he has his vessels of digestion and concoction, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal; this son of a cucumber!—These things are

unaccountable and unreasonable.—Body o'me, why was I not a bear, that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws? Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders; the one has its nutriment in its own hands; and the other spins its habitation out of its own entrails.

Val. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the necessities of my nature, if I had my right inheritance.

Sir S. Again! Oons, han't you four thousand pounds?—If I had it again I would not give thee a groat.—What, wouldst thou have me turn pelican, and feed thee out of my own vitals—Odsheart, live by your wits—you are always fond of the wits.—Now let's see if you have wit enough to keep yourself.—Your brother will be in town to-night, or to-morrow morning; and then look you perform covenants; and so your friend and servant.—Come, brother Foresight.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Jer. I told you what your visit would come to.

Val. 'Tis as much as I expected—I did not come to see him; I came to see Angelica; but since she was gone abroad, it was easily turned another way, and at least looked well on my side. What's here? Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail! They are earnest.—I'll avoid them.—Come this way, and go and inquire when Angelica will return. [*Exeunt* VAL. *and* JER.

Enter MRS. FORESIGHT *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. F. What have you to do to watch me? 'Slife, I'll do what I please.

Mrs. For. You will?

Mrs. F. Yes, marry, will I.—A great piece of business to go to Covent Garden, to take a turn in a hackney-coach with one's friend!

Mrs. For. Nay, two or three turns, I'll take my oath.

Mrs. F. Well, what if I took twenty!—I warrant, if you had been there, it had only been innocent recreation!—Lord, where's the comfort of this life, if we can't have the happiness of conversing where we like?

Mrs. For. But can't you converse at home!—I own it, I think there's no happiness like conversing with an agreeable man; I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your conversation was very innocent. But the place is public; and to be seen with a man in a hackney-coach is scandalous. What if any body else should have seen you alight, as I did?—How can any body be happy, while they are in perpetual fear of being seen and censured?—Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but on me!

Mrs. F. Pooh, here's a clatter!—Why should it reflect upon you?—I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney-coach before now!—If I had gone to Knightsbridge, or to Chelsea, or to Spring Garden, or to Barn Elms, with a man alone—something might have been said.

Mrs. For. Why, was I ever in any of those places?—What do you mean, sister?

Mrs. F. Was I? what do you mean?

Mrs. For. You have been at a worse place.

Mrs. F. I at a worse place, and with a man?

Mrs. For. I suppose you would not go alone to the World's-end.

Mrs. F. The World's-end! What, do you mean to banter me?

Mrs. For. Poor innocent! you don't know, that there is a place called the World's-end? I'll swear, you can keep your countenance purely! you'd make an admirable player!

Mrs. F. I'll swear you have a great deal of confidence, and in my mind too much for the stage.

Mrs. For. Very well, that will appear who has most. You never were at the World's-end?

Mrs. F. No.

Mrs. For. You deny it positively to my face?

Mrs. F. Your face! what's your face?

Mrs. For. No matter for that; it's as good a face as yours.

Mrs. F. Not by a dozen years wearing. But I do deny it positively to your face then.

Mrs. For. I'll allow you now to find fault with my face; for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance.—But look you here now,—where did you lose this gold bodkin? Oh, sister, sister!

Mrs. F. My bodkin!

Mrs. For. Nay, 'tis yours; look at it.

Mrs. F. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this bodkin?—Oh, sister, sister!—sister every way!

Mrs. For. Oh, devil on't! that I could not discover her, without betraying myself! [*Aside.*

Mrs. F. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to lay open one's self.

Mrs. For. It is very true, sister. Well, since all's out, and, as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do what is often done in duels, take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

Mrs. F. With all my heart. Well, give me your hand, in token of sisterly secrecy and affection.

Mrs. For. Here it is, with all my heart.

Mrs. F. Well, to tell truth, and speak openly one to another, I'm afraid the world have observed us more than we have observed one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for: I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation, and therefore must look sharply about me. Sir Sampson has a son, that is expected to-night; and by the account I have heard of his education, can be no conjuror. The estate, you know, is to be made

over to him.—Now, if I could wheedle him, sister, ha? you understand me?

Mrs. For. I do; and will help you, to the utmost of my power.—And I can tell you one thing that falls out luckily enough; my awkward daughter-in-law, who, you know, is designed to be his wife, is grown fond of Mr. Tattle; now, if we can improve that, and make her have an aversion for the booby, it may go a great way towards his liking you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave them together.

Enter TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Miss P. Mother, mother, mother, look you here!

Mrs. For. Fie, fie, miss, how you bawl!—Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

Miss P. What must I call you then? are you not my father's wife?

Mrs. For. Madam; you must say madam.

Miss P. Look you here, madam, then, what Mr. Tattle has given me.—Look you here, cousin; here's a snuff-box; nay, there's snuff in't—here, will you have any?—Oh good! how sweet it is!—Mr. Tattle is all over sweet; his peruke is sweet, and his gloves are sweet—and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses,—smell him, mother—madam, I mean.—He gave me this ring, for a kiss.

Tatt. O fie, miss; you must not kiss, and tell.

Miss P. Yes; I may tell my mother—and he says he'll give me something to make me smell so.—Oh, pray lend me your handkerchief.—Smell, cousin; Is not it pure?—It's better than lavender, mun.—I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?

Mrs. F. Fie, miss.

Tatt. Oh, madam! you are too severe upon miss; you must not find fault with her pretty simplicity; it

becomes her strangely.—Pretty miss, don't let them persuade you out of your innocency!

Mrs. For. I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency.

Tatt. Who I, madam?—O lord, how can your ladyship have such a thought?—sure you don't know me!

Mrs. F. Ah, devil, sly devil—He's as close, sister, as a confessor.—He thinks we don't observe him.

Tatt. Upon reputation——O lord, I swear I would not for the world—

Mrs. F. O, hang you; who'll believe you?—You'll be hanged before you'd confess—we know you—she's very pretty?—Lord, ne'er stir, I don't know, but I fancy, if I were a man—

Miss P. How you love to jeer one, cousin!

Mrs. For. Harkye, sister—by my soul, the girl is spoiled already—d'ye think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpaulin?—Gad, I warrant you she won't let him come near her, after Mr. Tattle.

Mrs. F. On my soul, I'm afraid not—eh! filthy creature, that smells all of pitch and tar!—Devil take you, you confounded toad, you will supplant the sailor.

Mrs. For. My husband will hang us—he'll think we brought them acquainted.

Mrs. F. Come, faith, let us be gone—If my brother Foresight should find us with them, he'd think so, sure enough.

Mrs. For. So he would—but then the leaving them together is as bad—and he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

Mrs. F. I don't care; I won't be seen in it. [*Exit.*

Mrs. For. Well, Mr. Tattle, we trust to your discretion. [*Exit* MRS. FORESIGHT.

Miss P. What makes them go away, Mr. Tattle?—What do they mean, do you know?

Tatt. Yes, my dear—I think I can guess—but hang me if I know the reason of it.

Miss P. Come, must not we go too?

Tatt. No, no; they don't mean that.

Miss P. No! what then? What shall you and I do together?

Tatt. I must make love to you, pretty miss; will you let me make love to you?

Miss P. Yes, if you please.

Tatt. Frank, egad, at least. What a plague does Mrs. Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by? Egad, I'll understand it so. [*Aside.*

Miss P. Well, and how will you make love to me? —Come, I long to have you begin.—Must I make love too? You must tell me how.

Tatt. You must let me speak, miss; you must not speak first. I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

Miss P. What, is it like the catechism?—Come then, ask me.

Tatt. D'ye think you can love me?

Miss P. Yes.

Tatt. Pooh, plague, you must not say yes already. I shan't care a farthing for you then, in a twinkling.

Miss P. What must I say then?

Tatt. Why you must say no; or, believe not; or, you can't tell.

Miss P. Why, must I tell a lie then?

Tatt. Yes, if you'd be well-bred. All well-bred persons lie—Besides, you are a woman; you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say no; but you must love me too—If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say, I flatter you. But you must think your-

self more charming than I speak you—and like me for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry; but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more, you must be more angry, but more complying; and as soon as ever I make you say, you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

Miss P. O lord, I swear this is pure!—I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind.—And must not you lie too?

Tatt. Hum!—Yes; but you must believe I speak truth.

Miss P. O Gemini! Well, I always had a great mind to tell lies—but they frighted me, and said it was a sin.

Tatt. Well, my pretty creature, will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

Miss P. No, indeed; I'm angry at you!

[*Runs and kisses him.*

Tatt. Hold, hold, that's pretty well—but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

Miss P. Well, we'll do it again.

Tatt. With all my heart.—Now, then, my little angel! [*Kisses her.*

Miss P. Pish!

Tatt. That's right. Again, my charmer!

[*Kisses again.*

Miss P. O fie! nay, now I can't abide you.

Tatt. Admirable! That was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent Garden.—And won't you shew me, pretty miss, where your bedchamber is?

Miss P. No, indeed won't I: but I'll run there, and hide myself from you, behind the curtains.

Tatt. I'll follow you.

Miss P. Ah, but I will hold the door with both

hands, and be angry; and you shall push me down before you come in.

Tatt. No, I'll come in first.

Miss P. Will you? then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

Tatt. Then I'll make you cry out.

Miss P. O but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

Tatt. Oh, my dear apt scholar!

Miss P. Well, now I'll run, and make more haste than you. [*Exit.*

Tatt. You shall not fly so fast as I'll pursue. [*Exit.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Miss, miss, miss Prue!—Come to your father, child. Open the door, miss.—I hear you cry husht.—O lord, who's there? [*Peeps.*] a man with her!—[*Knocks.*] won't you open the door? I'll come in the back way. [*Exit.*

Enter TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Miss P. O lord, she's coming—and she'll tell my father. What shall I do now?

Tatt. Plague take her! if she had staid two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

Miss P. O dear, what shall I say? Tell me, Mr. Tattle, tell me a lie.

Tatt. There's no occasion for a lie; I could never tell a lie to no purpose—But, since we have done nothing, we must say nothing, I think. I hear her—I'll leave you together, and come off as you can.

[*Thrusts her in, shuts the Door, and Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Room in FORESIGHT'S *House.*

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* ANGELICA.

Ang. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you, that I loved you.

Val. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or not.

Ang. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I never had concern enough to ask myself the question.

Scand. Nor goodnature enough to answer him that did ask you: I'll say that for you, madam.

Ang. What, are you setting up for goodnature?

Scand. Only for the affectation of it, as the women do for illnature.

Ang. Persuade your friend, that it is all affectation.

Val. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion, for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

Enter SIR SAMPSON, MRS. FRAIL, TATTLE, MISS PRUE, *and* JAMES.

Sir S. Is Ben come? Odso, my son Ben come? Odd, I'm glad on't.—Where is he? I long to see him. Now, Mrs. Frail, you shall see my son Ben.—Body o'me, he's the hopes of my family—I han't seen him these three years—I warrant he's grown!—Call him in; bid him make haste—I'm ready to cry for joy.

[*Exit* JAMES.

Mrs. F. Now, miss, you shall see your husband.

Miss P. Pish, he shall be none of my husband.

[*Aside to* MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. F. Hush! Well, he shan't! leave that to me—I'll beckon Mr. Tattle to us.

Ang. Won't you stay and see your brother?

Val. We are the twin stars, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises, I must set.—Besides, if I should stay, I don't know but my father, in good-nature, may press me to the immediate signing the deed of conveyance of my estate; and I'll defer it as long as I can.—Well, you'll come to a resolution.

Ang. I cannot. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

Scand. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I have something, in my head, to communicate to you.

[*Exeunt* SCANDAL *and* VALENTINE.

Sir S. What! is my son Valentine gone? What! is he sneaked off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! there's an illnatured dog! What! were you here too, madam, and could not keep him? could neither love, nor duty, nor natural affection, oblige him? Oddsbud, madam, have no more to say to him; he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a drachm of generous love about him—all interest, all interest! He's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate. Body o'me, he does not care a doit for your person.

Ang. I am pretty even with him, Sir Sampson; for, if ever I could have liked any thing in him, it should have been his estate too.

Sir S. Oddsbud, well spoken; and you are a wiser woman than I thought you were.

Ang. If I marry, Sir Sampson, I am for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate: therefore, if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

Sir S. Faith and troth, you are a wise woman; and I'm glad to hear you say so. I was afraid you were

in love with a reprobate.——Odd, I was sorry for you with all my heart. Hang him, mongrel; cast him off. You shall see the rogue show himself, and make love to some desponding Cadua of fourscore for sustenance. Odd, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak—faith I do. I love to see them hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

Enter BEN *and* JAMES.

Ben. Where's father?

James. There, sir; his back's towards you.

[*Exit* JAMES.

Sir S. My son Ben! Bless thee, my dear boy! Body o'me, thou art heartily welcome.

Ben. Thank you, father; and I'm glad to see you.

Sir S. Oddsbud, and I'm glad to see thee. Kiss me, boy; kiss me again and again, dear Ben.

[*Kisses him.*

Ben. So, so, enough, father.—Mess, I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

Sir S. And so thou shalt.—Mrs. Angelica, my son Ben.

Ben. Forsooth, if you please! [*Salutes her.*] Nay, mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here; about ship i'faith. [*Kisses* MRS. FRAIL.] Nay, and you too, my little cock-boat! so. [*Kisses* MISS.

Tatt. Sir, you're welcome ashore.

Ben. Thank you, thank you, friend.

Sir S. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

Ben. Ey ey, been? been far enough, and that be all. Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

Sir S. Dick! body o'me, Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word, when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mess, that's true; marry, I had forgot. Dick

is dead, as you say.—Well, and how, I have a many questions to ask you; Well, you ben't married again, father, be you?

Sir S. No, I intend you shall marry, Ben; I would not marry, for thy sake.

Ben. Nay, what does that signify?—An' you marry again—why then, I'll go to sea again, so there's one for t'other, and that be all.—Pray don't let me be your hindrance; e'en marry, a God's name, and the wind sit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

Mrs. F. That would be pity, such a handsome young gentleman.

Ben. Handsome! he! he! he! Nay, forsooth, an' you be for joking, I'll joke with you; for I love my jest, an' the ship were sinking, as we said at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand towards matrimony. I love to roam about from port to port, and from land to land; I could never abide to be port-bound, as we call it. Now, a man that is married, has, as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes, and mayhap mayn't get them out again when he would.

Sir S. Ben is a wag.

Ben. A man that is married, d'ye see, is no more like another man, than a galley slave is like one of us free sailors: he is chained to an oar all his life; and mayhap forced to tug a crazy vessel into the bargain.

Sir S. A very wag! Ben is a very wag; only a little rough; he wants a little polishing.

Mrs. F. Not at all; I like his humour mightily: it is plain and honest! I should like such a humour in a husband extremely.

Ben. Say'n you so, forsooth? Marry, and I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bedfellow hugely. How say you, mistress? would you like going to sea? Mess, you're a tight vessel, and well rigged, an' you were but as well manned.

Mrs. F. I should not doubt that, if you were master of me.

Ben. But I'll tell you one thing, an' you come to sea in a high wind, or that lady—you mayn't carry so much sail o'your head—Top and top gallant, by the mess!

Mrs. F. No;—why so?

Ben. Why, an' you do, you may run the risk to be overset: and then you'll carry your keels above water—He! he! he!

Ang. I swear, Mr. Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature; an absolute sea wit.

Sir S. Nay, Ben has parts; but, as I told you before, they want a little polishing. You must not take any thing ill, madam.

Ben. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry; I mean all in good part: for, if I give a jest, I'll take a jest: and so, forsooth, you may be as free with me.

Ang. I thank you, sir; I am not at all offended.—But methinks, Sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress. Mr. Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

Tatt. Well, miss, I have your promise.

[*Aside to* MISS PRUE.—*Exeunt* ANGELICA *and* TATTLE.

Sir S. Body o'me, madam, you say true.—Look you, Ben, this is your mistress.—Come, miss, you must not be shame-faced; we'll leave you together.

Miss P. I can't abide to be left alone. Mayn't my cousin stay with me?

Sir S. No, no. Come, let's away.

Ben. Look you, father, mayhap the young woman mayn't take a liking to me.

Sir S. I warrant thee, boy. Come, come, we'll be gone. I'll venture that.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON, *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Ben. Come, mistress, will you please to sit down? For, an' you stand a stern a that'n, we shall never

grapple together.—Come, I'll haul a chair; there, an' you please you to sit, I'll sit by you.

Miss P. You need not sit so near one; if you have any thing to say, I can hear you farther off;—I an't deaf.

Ben. Why, that's true, as you say, nor I an't dumb; I can be heard as far as another. I'll heave off, to please you. [*Sits farther off.*] An' we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, an' 'twere not a main high wind indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you, forsooth, I am, as it were, bound for the land of matrimony: 'tis a voyage, d'ye see, that was none of my seeking; I was commanded by father. How say you, mistress? The short of the thing is that, if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

Miss P. I don't know what to say to you; nor I don't care to speak with you at all.

Ben. No; I'm sorry for that.—But pray why are you so scornful?

Miss P. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all, I think; and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

Ben. Nay, you say true in that; it's but a folly to lie: for to speak one thing, and to think just the contrary way, is, as it were, to look one way, and to row another. Now, for my part d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board; I'm not for keeping any thing under hatches—so that, if you ben't as willing as I, say so, a God's name; there's no harm done. Mayhap you may be shame-faced; some maidens, thof they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face. If that's the case, why silence gives consent.

Miss P. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you shall believe that; and I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man;

43016

and I don't care, let my father do what he will, I'm too big to be whipped; so I'll tell you plainly I don't like you, nor love you at all; nor never will, that's more. So there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

Ben. Look you, young woman, you may learn to give good words, however. I spoke you fair, d'ye see, and civil. As for your love, or your liking, I don't value it of a rope's end—and mayhap I like you as little as you do me. What I said was in obedience to father. Gad, I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing—if you should give such language at sea, you'd have a cat o'nine tails laid cross your shoulders. Flesh! who are you? You heard t'other handsome young woman speak civilly to me, of her own accord. Whatever you think of yourself, gad, I don't think you are any more to compare to her, than a can of small-beer to a bowl of punch.

Miss P. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your jacket for you; he will, you great sea-calf.

Ben. What! do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my jacket?—Let'n—let'n. But an' he comes near me, mayhap I may giv'n a salt eel for's supper, for all that. What does father mean, to leave me alone, as soon as I come home, with such a dirty dowdy?—Sea-calf? I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you.—Marry thee! Oons I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon selling contrary winds, and wrecked vessels.

Miss P. I won't be called names, nor I won't be abused thus, so I won't. If I were a man—[*Cries.*]—you durst not talk at this rate—no, you durst not, you stinking tar-barrel.

Enter MRS. FORESIGHT *and* MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. For. They have quarrelled, just as we could wish.

Ben. Tar-barrel? Let your sweetheart there call me so, if he'll take your part, your Tom Essence, and I'll say something to him—Gad, I'll lace his musk doublet for him. I'll make him smell more like a weasel than a civit cat, afore I ha' done with 'en.

Mrs. For. Bless me! what's the matter, miss? What, does she cry?—Mr. Benjamin, what have you done to her?

Ben. Let her cry: the more she cries the less she'll—she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

Mrs. For. Come, miss, come along with me; and tell me, poor child.

Mrs. F. Lord, what shall we do? There's my brother Foresight and Sir Sampson coming. Sister, do you take miss down into the parlour, [*Exeunt* MRS. FORESIGHT *and* MISS PRUE.] and I'll carry Mr. Benjamin into my chamber; for they must not know that they are fallen out. Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me? [*Looking kindly on him.*

Ben. Venture! Mess, and that I will, though it were to sea in a storm. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Sir S. I left them together here. What, are they gone? Ben is a brisk boy: he has got her into a corner——father's own son, faith! he'll touzle her, and mouzle her. The rogue's sharp set coming from sea. If he should not stay for saying grace, old Foresight, but fall to without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he should, I could not be angry with him; 'twould be but like me, a chip of the old block. Ha! thou'rt melancholic, old prognostication: as melancholic as if thou hadst spilt the salt, or paired thy nails on a

Sunday. Come, cheer up, look about thee: look up, old star-gazer. Now is he poring upon the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

For. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir S. With all my heart.

For. At ten o'clock; punctually at ten.

Sir S. To a minute, to a second; thou shalt set thy watch, and the bridegroom shall observe its motions; they shall be married to a minute, go to bed to a minute,——

Enter JAMES.

James. Sir, Mr. Scandal desires to speak with you, upon earnest business, which must be told you, he says, within this hour, or 'twill be too late.

For. I'll wait on him.—Sir Sampson, your servant. [*Exit.*

Sir S. What is this business, friend?

James. Sir, 'tis about your son Valentine! something has appeared to him in a dream, that makes him prophesy. [*Exit* JAMES.

Sir S. Hoity toity! what have I to do with his dreams or his divination?—Body o'me, this is a trick to defer signing the conveyance. I warrant the devil will tell him in a dream, that he must not part with his estate. But I'll bring him a parson, to tell him that the devil's a liar—or, if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer that shall out-lie the devil; and so I'll try whether my blackguard or his shall get the better of the day. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

VALENTINE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter SCANDAL *and* JEREMY.

Scand. Well, is your master ready? does he look madly, and talk madly?

Jer. Yes, sir; you need make no great doubt of that: he, that was so near turning poet yesterday morning, can't be much to seek in playing the madman to-day.

Scand. Would he have Angelica acquainted with the design?

Jer. No, sir, not yet.—He has a mind to try whether his playing the madman won't make her play the fool, and fall in love with him; or, at least, own that she has loved him all this while, and concealed it.

Scand. I saw her take coach just now, with her maid; and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

Jer. Like enough, sir; for I told her maid this morning, my master was run stark mad, only for love of her mistress.—[*Knock.*] I hear a coach stop; if it should be she, sir, I believe he would not see her, 'till he hears how she takes it.

Scand. Well, I'll try her—'tis she; here she comes.

Enter ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning.

Scand. Not upon a kind occasion, madam. But,

when a lady comes tyrannically to insult a ruined lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty, the barbarity of it something surprises me.

Ang. I don't like raillery from a serious face.—[*To* JEREMY.] Pray tell me what is the matter?

Jer. No strange matter, madam; my master's mad, that's all. I suppose your ladyship has thought him so a great while.

Ang. How d'ye mean, mad?

Jer. Why, faith, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money. His head is e'en as light as his pockets; and any body that has a mind to a bad bargain, can't do better than to beg him for his estate.

Ang. If you speak truth, your endeavouring at wit is very unseasonable.

Scand. She's concerned, and loves him! [*Aside.*

Ang. Mr. Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity, as not to be concerned for a man I must own myself obliged to.——Pray tell me the truth.

Scand. Faith, madam, I wish telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

Ang. [*Aside.*] I know not what to think;—Yet I should be vexed to have a trick put upon me—May I not see him?

Scand. I am afraid the physician is not willing you should see him yet.—Jeremy, go in and inquire.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Ang. Ha! I saw him wink and smile! I fancy a trick.—I'll try. [*Aside*]—I would disguise to all the world, sir, a failing which I must own to you—I fear my happiness depends upon the recovery of Valentine.

Scand. So, this is pretty plain!—Be not too much concerned, madam; I hope his condition is not desperate. An acknowledgment of love from you, per-

haps, may work a cure, as the fear of your aversion occasioned his distemper.

Ang. Say you so! nay, then I'm convinced: and if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge! [*Aside*]—Acknowledgment of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I am a stranger to. Goodnature and humanity oblige me to be concerned for him; but to love, is neither in my power nor inclination.

Scand. Hey, brave woman, i'faith!—Won't you see him then, if he desires it?

Ang. What signifies a madman's desires? besides 'twould make me uneasy—If I don't see him, perhaps, my concern for him may lessen—If I forget him, 'tis no more than he has done by himself; and now the surprise is over, methinks I'm not half so sorry as I was.

Scand. So, faith, goodnature works apace; you were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

Ang. But I have considered that passions are unreasonable and involuntary. If he loves, he can't help it; and if I don't love, I cannot help it, no more than he can help his being a man, or I my being a woman; or no more than I can help my want of inclination to stay longer here. [*Exit with* JENNY.

Scand. Humph!—An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind!

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. What, is she gone, sir?

Scand. Gone!—why, she was never here, nor any where else; nor I don't know her if I see her, nor you neither.

Jer. Good lack, what's the matter now? are any more of us to be mad? Why, sir, my master longs to see her; and is almost mad in good earnest with the joyful news of her being here.

Scand. We are all under a mistake.—Ask no ques-

tions, for I can't resolve you; but I'll inform your master. In the mean time, if our project succeed no better with his father than it does with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of common sense, and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people. I hear Sir Sampson. You know your cue; I'll to your master. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR SAMPSON *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir S. D'ye see, Mr. Buckram, here's the paper signed with his own hand.

Buck. Good, sir. And the conveyance is ready drawn in this bag, if he be ready to sign and seal.

Sir S. Ready! body o'me, he must be ready: his sham sickness shan't excuse him.—O, here's his scoundrel.—Sirrah, where's your master?

Jer. Ah, sir, he's quite gone!

Sir S. Gone! what, he's not dead?

Jer. No, sir, not dead.

Sir S. What, is he gone out of town? run away? ha! has he tricked me? Speak, varlet.

Jer. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, an' he were but as sound, poor gentleman! He is indeed here, sir, and not here, sir.

Sir S. Heyday, rascal, do you banter me? sirrah, d'ye banter me?—Speak, sirrah; where is he? for I will find him.

Jer. 'Would you could, sir; for he has lost himself.—Indeed, sir, I have almost broke my heart about him—I can't refrain tears when I think on him, sir: I'm as melancholy for him as a passing-bell, sir; or a horse in a pound.

Sir S. A plague confound your similitudes, sir:—Speak to be understood; and tell me in plain terms what the matter is with him, or I'll crack your fool's skull.

Jer. Ah, you've hit, sir; that's the matter with

him, sir; his skull's crack'd, poor gentleman! he's stark mad, sir.

Sir S. Mad!

Buck. What, is he *non compos?*

Jer. Quite *non compos*, sir.

Buck. Why, then, all's obliterated, Sir Sampson. If he be *non compos mentis*, his act and deed will be of no effect; it is not good in law.

Sir S. Oons, I won't believe it; let me see him, sir.—Mad! I'll make him find his senses.

Jer. Mr. Scandal is with him, sir; I'll knock at the door.

[*Goes to the Scene, which opens and discovers* VALENTINE *upon a Couch, disorderly dressed;* SCANDAL *near him.*

Sir S. How now? what's here to do?

Val. Ha! who's that! [*Starting.*

Scand. For Heaven's sake, softly, sir, and gently; don't provoke him.

Val. Answer me, who's that? and that?

Sir S. Gads bobs, does he not know? is he mischievous? I'll speak gently.—Val, Val, dost thou not know me, boy? not know thy own father, Val? I am thy own father; and this, honest Brief Buckram, the lawyer.

Val. It may be so—I did not know you—the world is full.—There are people that we do know, and people that we do not know; and yet the sun shines upon all alike.—There are fathers that have many children; and there are children that have many fathers—'tis strange! But I am Honesty, and come to give the world the lie.

Sir S. Body o'me, I know not what to say to him.

Val. Why does that lawyer wear black?—does he carry his conscience without-side? Lawyer, what art thou? dost thou know me?

Buck. O lord, what must I say?——Yes, sir.

Val. Thou liest; for I am Honesty. 'Tis hard I cannot get a livelihood amongst you. I have been sworn out of Westminster Hall the first day of every term—Let me see—no matter how long—I am Honesty, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintance.

Sir S. Body o'me, he talks sensibly in his madness—Has he no intervals?

Jer. Very short, sir.

Buck. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition. Here's your paper, sir.——He may do me a mischief, if I stay.——The conveyance is ready, sir, if he recover his senses. [*Exit.*

Sir S. Hold, hold, don't you go yet.

Scand. You'd better let him go, sir; and send for him, if there be occasion: for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

Val. Is the lawyer gone? 'Tis well; then we may drink about without going together by the ears.——Heigho! what o'clock is it! My father here! your blessing, sir.

Sir S. He recovers!—Bless thee, Val!—How dost thou do, boy?

Val. Thank you, sir, pretty well.—I have been a little indisposed. Won't you please to sit, sir?

Sir S. Ay, boy.—Come, thou shalt sit down by me.

Val. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait.

Sir S. No, no: come, come, sit thee down, honest Val. How dost thee do? let me feel thy pulse—Oh, pretty well now, Val. Body o'me, I was sorry to see thee indisposed: but I am glad thou art better, honest Val.

Val. I thank you, sir.

Scand. Miracle! the monster grows loving. [*Aside.*

Sir S. Let me feel thy hand again, Val. It does not shake—I believe thou canst write, Val. Ha, boy? thou canst write thy name, Val?—Jeremy, step

and overtake Mr. Buckram: bid him make haste back with the conveyance,—quick!

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Scand. That ever I should suspect such a heathen of any remorse! [*Aside.*

Sir S. Dost thou know this paper, Val? I know thou'rt honest, and will perform articles.

[*Shows him the Paper, but holds it out of his Reach.*

Val. Pray let me see it, sir; you hold it so far off, that I can't tell whether I know it or no.

Sir S. See it, boy? Ay, ay, why thou dost see it —'tis thy own hand, Vally. Why, let me see, I can read it as plain as can be: look you here—[*Reads.*] *The condition of this obligation.*—Look you, as plain as can be, so it begins——And then at the bottom—*As witness my hand,* VALENTINE LEGEND, in great letters. Why, 'tis as plain as the nose on one's face. What, are my eyes better than thine? I believe I can read it farther off yet—let me see.

[*Stretches his Arm as far as he can.*

Val. Will you please to let me hold it, sir?

Sir S. Let thee hold it, say'st thou?—Ay, with all my heart—What matter is it who holds it? What need any body hold it?—I'll put it in my pocket, Val, and then nobody need hold it. [*Puts the Paper in his Pocket.*] There, Val: it's safe enough, boy.—But thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

Enter JEREMY *and* BUCKRAM.

Val. What, is my bad genius here again? Oh no, 'tis the lawyer with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratched.—My nails are not long enough.—Let me have a pair of red-hot tongs quickly, quickly; and you shall see me act St. Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.

Buck. O lord, let me be gone! I'll not venture myself with a madman. [*Runs out.*

Val. Ha! ha! ha! you need not run so fast. Honesty will not overtake you.—Ha! ha! ha! the rogue found me to be *in forma pauperis* presently.

Sir S. Oons! what a vexation is here! I know not what to do or say, or which way to go.

Val. Who's that, that's out of his way? I am Honesty, and can set him right.—Harkye friend, the strait road is the worst way you can go.—But it is wonderful strange, Jeremy.

Jer. What is it, sir?

Val. That grey hairs should cover a green head—and I make a fool of my father.

For. [*Without*]. Where is he? where is he?

Val. What's here? *Erra Pater*, or a bearded Sybil? If Prophecy comes, Honesty must give place.

[*Exeunt* VALENTINE *and* JEREMY.

Enter FORESIGHT, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* MRS. FRAIL.

For. What says he? What did he prophesy? Ha, Sir Sampson! Bless us! how are we?

Sir S. Are we? A plague on your prognostications! Why, we are fools as we used to be.—Oons, that you could not foresee that the moon would predominate, and my son be mad!—Where are your oppositions, your trines, and your quadrates?—Ah! plague on't, that I who know the world, and men and manners, who don't believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and sun and almanacks, and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter, and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour! when, body o'me! there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity. [*Exit.*

For. Ah, Sir Sampson, Heaven help your head! ——This is none of your lucky hour—— *Nemo omnibus horis sapit!*——What, is he gone, and in con-

tempt of science? Ill stars and unconvertible ignorance attend him!

Scand. You must excuse his passion, Mr. Foresight; for he has been heartily vexed.—His son is *Non compos mentis*, and thereby incapable of making any conveyance in law; so that all his measures are disappointed.

For. Ha! say you so?

Mrs. F. What, has my sea lover lost his anchor of hope then? [*Aside to* MRS. FORESIGHT.

Mrs. For. O sister, what will you do with him?

Mrs. F. Do with him? Send him to sea again in the next foul weather.—He's used to an inconstant element, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

For. Wherein was I mistaken, not to foresee this? [*Considers.*

Scand. But would you not talk with Valentine? Perhaps you may understand him; I am apt to believe, there is something mysterious in his discourse, and sometimes rather think him inspired than mad.

For. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr. Scandal, truly.—I am inclining to your Turkish opinion in this matter, and do reverence a man whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go to him.

[*Exeunt* FORESIGHT *and* SCANDAL.

Mrs. F. Sister, do you go with them; I'll find out my lover, and give him his discharge, and come to you. [*Exit* MRS. FORESIGHT.] On my conscience, here he is!

Enter BEN.

Ben. All mad, I think.—Flesh, I believe all the calentures of the sea are come ashore, for my part.

Mrs. F. Mr. Benjamin in choler!

Ben. No, I'm pleased well enough, now I have

found you.—Mess, I have had such a hurricane on your account yonder!

Mrs. F. My account?—Pray, what's the matter?

Ben. Why, father came, and found me squabbling with yon chitty-faced thing, as he would have me marry—so he asked what was the matter.—He asked in a surly sort of a way.—It seems brother Val is gone mad, and so that put'n into a passion; but what did I know that?—what's that to me?—So he asked in a surly sort of manner—and, gad, I answered 'en as surlily. What thof he be my father, I an't bound prentice to 'en: so, faith, I told'n in plain terms, if I were minded to marry, I'd marry to please myself, not him; and for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her sampler, and make dirt-pies, than to look after a husband; for my part, I was none of her man—I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.

Mrs. F. So then, you intend to go to sea again?

Ben. Nay, nay, my mind ran upon you—but I would not tell him so much.—So he said, he'd make my heart ache; and if so be that he could get a woman to his mind, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, an' you play the fool, and marry at these years, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart!—He was woundy angry when I giv'n that wipe—he hadn't a word to say; and so I left'n, and the green girl together; mayhap the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself—with all my heart!

Mrs. F. And were you this undutiful and graceless wretch to your father?

Ben. Then why was he graceless first?

Mrs. F. O impiety! how have I been mistaken! What an inhuman merciless creature have I set my heart upon! O, I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands that lurk beneath that faithless smiling face!

Ben. Hey-toss! what's the matter now? why, you ben't angry, be you?

Mrs. F. O, see me no more—for thou wert born among rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and thou art come forth with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

Ben. O lord, O lord, she's mad, poor young woman! Love has turned her senses; her brain is quite overset.—Well-a-day! how shall I do to set her to rights?

Mrs. F. No, no, I am not mad, monster; I am wise enough to find you out.—Hadst thou the impudence to aspire at being a husband, with that stubborn and disobedient temper?—You, that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely fobbed indeed, very finely fobbed!

Ben. Harkye, forsooth; if so be that you are in your right senses, d'ye see, for aught as I perceive I'm like to be finely fobbed—if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tacked about already!—What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what, would you sheer off so? would you? and leave me aground.

Mrs. F. No, I'll leave you adrift, and go which way you will.

Ben. What, are you false-hearted then?

Mrs. F. Only the wind's changed.

Ben. More shame for you!—The wind's changed? It is an ill-wind blows nobody good.——Mayhap I have a good riddance on you, if these be your tricks. ——What, did you mean all this while to make a fool of me?

Mrs. F. Any fool, but a husband.

Ben. Husband! Gad, I would not be your husband, if you would have me, now I know your mind;

thof you had your weight in gold and jewels, and thof I loved you never so well.

Mrs. F. Why, canst thou love, Porpus?

Ben. No matter what I can do; don't call names.—I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did.—I'm glad you show yourself, mistress:—let them marry you as don't know you.—Gad, I know you too well, by sad experience; I believe, he, that marries you, will go to sea in a hen-pecked frigate.—I believe that, young woman! and mayhap may come to an anchor at Cuckold's Point; so there's a dash for you, take it as you will; mayhap you may hollow after me when I won't come to you. [*Exit.*

Mrs. F. Ha! ha! ha! no doubt on't.—[Sings.] *My true love is gone to sea!*

Enter MRS. FORESIGHT.

O sister, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover.—Honest Tar and I are parted;—and with the same indifference that we met.—On my life, I am half vexed at the insensibility of a brute I despised.

Mrs. For. What, then, he bore it most heroically?

Mrs. F. Most tyrannically—for you see he has got the start of me; and I, the poor forsaken maid, am left complaining on the shore. But I'll tell you a hint that he has given me. Sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself. If he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

Mrs. For. O hang him, old fox! he's too cunning; besides, he hates both you and me. But I have a project in my head for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

Mrs. F. Sell him? how?

Mrs. For. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and took

me for her; and Jeremy says will take any body for her that he imposes on him. Now I have promised him mountains, if in one of his mad fits he will bring you to him in her stead, and get you married.—— Here they come; stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

Enter SCANDAL *and* JEREMY.

Scand. And have you given your master a hint of their plot upon him? [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. Yes, sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

Scand. It may make us sport.

Enter VALENTINE *and* FORESIGHT.

For. Mercy on us!

Val. Hush!—interrupt me not—I'll whisper prediction to thee, and thou shalt prophesy.—I have told thee what's past—Now I'll tell what's to come!—Dost thou know what will happen to-morrow?—Answer me not—for I will tell thee. To-morrow knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune; and Honesty will go as it did, frost-nipt in a summer suit. Ask me questions concerning to-morrow.

Scand. Ask him, Mr. Foresight.

For. Pray, what will be done at court?

Val. Scandal will tell you—I am Honesty; I never come there.

For. In the city?

Val. O, prayers will be said in empty churches, at the usual hours. Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh! things will go methodically in the city. Husbands and wives will drive distinct trades; and care and pleasure separately occupy the family.—— But, hold, I must examine you before I go further; you look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

For. I am married.

Val. Poor creature! Is your wife of Covent Garden parish?

For. No; St. Martin in the Fields.

Val. Alas; poor man! his eyes are sunk, and his hands shrivelled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed. Pray, pray for a metamorphosis.—Change thy shape, and shake off age; get thee Medea's kettle, and be boiled anew; come forth, with labouring, callous hands, a chine of steel and Atlas' shoulders. Let Taliacotius trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make thee pedestals to stand erect upon; and look matrimony in the face. Ha! ha! ha! that a man should have a stomach to a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet! ha! ha! ha!

For. His frenzy is very high now, Mr. Scandal.

Scand. I believe it is a spring tide.

For. Very likely, truly; you understand these matters.—Mr. Scandal, I shall be very glad to confer with you about these things which he has uttered.—His sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

Val. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

Jer. She's here, sir.

Mrs. For. Now, sister.

Mrs. F. O lord, what must I say?

Scand. Humour him, madam, by all means.

Val. Where is she? Oh, I see her!—She comes like riches, health, and liberty, at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandoned wretch.—O welcome, welcome!

Mrs. F. How d'ye, sir? can I serve you?

Val. Harkye, I have a secret to tell you—Endymion and the moon shall meet us upon Mount Latmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night.—But say not a word.—Hymen shall put his torch into a dark lantern, that it may be secret; and Juno shall

give her peacock poppy water, that he may fold his ogling tail; and Argus's hundred eyes be shut, ha? Nobody shall know but Jeremy.

Mrs. F. No, no, we'll keep it secret; it shall be done presently.

Val. The sooner the better—Jeremy, come hither ——closer—that none may overhear us. Jeremy, I can tell you news. Angelica is turned nun; and I am turned friar: and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part—for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project; and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of—and then we'll blush once for all.

Jer. I'll take care, and——

Val. Whisper.

Enter ANGELICA *and* TATTLE.

Ang. Nay, Mr. Tattle, if you make love to me, you spoil my design; for I intend to make you my confidant.

Scand. How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica!

Tatt. But, madam, to throw away your person, such a person! and such a fortune, on a madman!

Ang. I never loved him till he was mad; but don't tell any body so.

Tatt. Tell, madam! alas, you don't know me.—I have much ado to tell your ladyship how long I have been in love with you—but, encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. Oh, madam, look upon us both. There you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature! —Here, a complete lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam; and to all this, the most passionate lover—

Ang. O fie for shame, hold your tongue. A passionate lover, and five senses in perfection! When you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me; and the maddest shall take me.

Val. It is enough. Ha! who's there?

Mrs. F. O lord, her coming will spoil all.

[*To* JEREMY.

Jer. No, no, madam; he won't know her; if he should, I can persuade him.

Val. Scandal, who are these? Foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think.—Get away all the company but Angelica, that I may discover my design to her. [*Whispers.*

Scand. I will.—I have discovered something of Tattle, that is of a piece with Mrs. Frail. He courts Angelica: if we could contrive to couple them together——Harkye—— [*Whispers.*

Mrs. For. He won't know you, cousin; he knows nobody.

For. But he knows more than any body.—Oh, niece, he knows things past and to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

Tatt. Look you, Mr. Foresight; it is not my way to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much. But in short, d'ye see, I will hold you a hundred pounds, now, that I know more secrets than he.

For. How? I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr. Tattle. Pray what do you know?

Tatt. Why, d'ye think I'll tell you, sir?—Read it in my face! No, sir, it is written in my heart; and safer there, sir, than letters written in juice of lemon, for no fire can fetch it out. I'm no blab, sir.

Val. Acquaint Jeremy with it: he may easily bring it about.—They are welcome, and I'll tell them so myself. [*To* SCANDAL.] What, do you look strange upon me?—Then I must be plain: [*Coming up to them.*] I am Honesty, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face. [SCANDAL *goes aside with* JEREMY.

Tatt. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. You? Who are you? I hope not.

Tatt. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

Val. My friend! what to do? I'm no married man, and thou canst not lie with my wife. I am very poor, and thou canst not borrow money of me. Then what employment have I for a friend?.

Tatt. Ha! a good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

Ang. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. Oh, very well.

Ang. Who am I?

Val. You're a woman—one to whom nature gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of heaven in a pond; and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely spotless paper, when you were first born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing; I found out what a woman is good for.

Tatt. Ay, pr'ythee, what's that?

Val. Why, to keep a secret.

Tatt. O lord!

Val. O, exceeding good to keep a secret: for though she should tell, yet she is not believed.

Tatt. Ha! good again, faith.

Jer. I'll do't, sir.

Scand. Mr. Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

For. I will be directed by you. [*Exit* FORESIGHT.

Jer. [*To* MRS. FRAIL.] You'll meet, madam.—I'll take care every thing shall be ready.

Mrs. F. Thou shalt do what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

Tatt. Madam, shall I wait upon you?

[*To* ANGELICA.

Ang. No, I'll stay with him.—Mr. Scandal will

protect me. Aunt, Mr. Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait upon you.

Tatt. Pox on't, there's no coming off, now she has said that—Madam, will you do me the honour?

Mrs. For. Mr. Tattle might have used less ceremony!

[*Exeunt* MRS. FRAIL, MRS. FORESIGHT, *and* TATTLE.

Scand. Jeremy, follow Tattle. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Ang. Mr. Scandal, I only stay till my maid comes, and because I have a mind to be rid of Mr. Tattle.

Scand. Madam, I am very glad, that I overheard a better reason which you gave to Mr. Tattle; for his impertinence forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you denied to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery; and your ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

Ang. Oh Heavens! you won't leave me alone with a madman?

Scand. No, madam; I only leave a madman to his remedy. [*Exit.*

Val. Madam, you need not be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

Ang. Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hang'd. [*Aside.*

Val. You see what disguises love makes us put on. Gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this masque of madness, and this motley livery, only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty.

Ang. Mercy on me, how he talks!—Poor Valentine!

Val. Nay, faith, now let us understand one another; hypocrisy apart. The comedy draws towards an end; and let us think of leaving acting, and be ourselves;

and since you have loved me, you must own, I have at length deserved you should confess it.

Ang. [*Sighs.*] I would I had loved you!—for Heaven knows, I pity you; and, could I have foreseen the bad effects, I would have striven; but that's too late!

Val. What bad effects? what's too late?—My seeming madness has deceived my father, and procured me time to think of means to reconcile me to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise, by articles, I must this morning have resigned. And this I had informed you of to-day, but you were gone before I knew you had been here.

Ang. How! I thought your love of me had caused this transport in your soul; which, it seems, you only counterfeited for mercenary ends and sordid interest.

Val. Nay, now you do me wrong; for, if any interest was considered, it was yours; since I thought I wanted more than love to make me worthy of you.

Ang. Then you thought me mercenary—But how am I deluded, by this interval of sense, to reason with a madman!

Val. Oh, 'tis barbarous to misunderstand me longer.

Enter JEREMY.

Ang. Oh, here's a reasonable creature—sure he will not have the impudence to persevere!—Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness counterfeit.

Jer. Counterfeit, madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad, as any freeholder in Bedlam. Nay, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chemist, lover, or poet, in Europe.

Val. Sirrah, you lie; I'm not mad.

Ang. Ha! ha! ha! you see he denies it.

Jer. O lord, madam, did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

Val. Sot, can't you apprehend?

Ang. Why, he talked very sensibly just now.

Jer. Yes, madam; he has intervals: but you see he begins to look wild again now.

Val. Why you thick-sculled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I'll be mad no longer. [*Beats him.*

Ang. Ha! ha! ha! is he mad or no, Jeremy?

Jer. Partly, I think—for he does not know his own mind two hours. I'm sure I left him just now in the humour to be mad: and I think I have not found him very quiet at the present. [*One knocks.*] Who's there? [*Exit* JEREMY.

Val. Go see, you sot. I'm very glad that I can move your mirth, though not your compassion.

Ang. I did not think you had apprehension enough to be exceptious: but madmen show themselves most by over-pretending to a sound understanding, as drunken men do by over-acting sobriety. I was half inclining to believe you, till I accidentally touched upon your tender part. But now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, your father has sent, to know if you are any better yet.—Will you please to be mad, sir, or how?

Val. Stupidity! you know the penalty of all I'm worth must pay for the confession of my senses. I'm mad, and will be mad, to every body but this lady.

Jer. So;—just the very reverse of truth. But lying is a figure in speech, that interlards the greatest part of my conversation.—Madam, your ladyship's woman. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Enter JENNY.

Ang. Well, have you been there?—Come hither.

Jenny. Yes, madam; Sir Sampson will wait upon you presently. [*Aside to* ANGELICA.

Val. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

Ang. Would any thing but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing; and the overtaking and possessing of a wish, discovers the folly of the chase. Never let us know one another better; for the pleasure of a masquerade is done, when we come to show our faces. But I'll tell you two things before I leave you; I am not the fool you take me for; and you are mad, and don't know it.

[*Exeunt* ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Enter JEREMY.

Val. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction, and the moral of my lesson.

Jer. What, is the lady gone again, sir? I hope you understood one another before she went?

Val. Understood! she is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity, or an Irish manuscript; you may pore till you spoil your eyes, and not improve your knowledge.

Jer. I have heard them say, sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards. May be you begin to read at the wrong end!

Val. Yet, while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her, if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, who says,—

That women are like tricks by slight of hand;
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in FORESIGHT'S *House.*

Enter ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Ang. Where is Sir Sampson? Did you not tell me, he would be here before me?

Jenny. He's at the great glass in the dining-room, madam, setting his cravat and wig.

Ang. How! I'm glad on't.—If he has a mind I should like him, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

Jenny. I hear him, madam.

Ang. Leave me; and, d'ye hear, if Valentine should come, or send, I'm not to be spoken with.

[*Exit* JENNY.

Enter SIR SAMPSON.

Sir S. I have not been honoured with the commands of a fair lady a great while.—Odd, madam, you have revived me—not since I was five and thirty.

Ang. Why, you have no great reason to complain, Sir Sampson; that's not long ago.

Sir S. Zooks, but it is, madam, a very great while; to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

Ang. You're an absolute courtier, Sir Sampson.

Sir S. Not at all, madam. Odsbud, you wrong me: I am not so old neither, to be a bare courtier, only a man of words.—Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon, faith and troth you do. Come, don't despise fifty; odd, fifty, in a hale constitution, is no such contemptible age!

Ang. Fifty a contemptible age! not at all: a very fashionable age, I think—I assure you, I know very considerable beaux, that set a good face upon fifty.——

Fifty! I have seen fifty in a side-box, by candle-light, out-blossom five and twenty.

Sir S. Outsides, outsides; a pize take them, mere outsides. Hang your side-box beaux; no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees, that pretend to blossom in the fall; and bud when they should bring forth fruit. I am of a long-lived race, and inherit vigour. None of my ancestors married till fifty; yet they begot sons and daughters till fourscore. I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, madam, what are your commands? Has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat; or——

Ang. No, Sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands——I have more occasion for your conduct than your courage at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single, and want a husband.

Sir S. Madam, you deserve a good husband! and 'twere pity you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Odd, there's ne'er a young fellow worth hanging—that is, a *very* young fellow.

Ang. Therefore I ask your advice, Sir Sampson. I have fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like; if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man, with a reasonable stock of good nature, and sense——for I would neither have an absolute wit, nor a fool.

Sir S. Odd, you are hard to please, madam: to find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye, nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a very hard task. But, faith and troth, you speak very discreetly. I hate a wit; I had a son that was spoiled among them; a good hopeful lad, till he learned to be a wit—and might have risen in the state. But, a plague on't, his wit ran him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

Ang. Sir Sampson, as your friend, I must tell you, you are very much abused in that matter—he's no more mad than you are.

Sir S. How, madam! would I could prove it!

Ang. I can tell you how that may be done—but it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned in your affairs.

Sir S. Odsbud, I believe she likes me! [*Aside.*]—If I had Peru in one hand, and Mexico in t'other, and the eastern empire under my feet; it would make me only a more glorious victim, to be offered at the shrine of your beauty.

Ang. Bless me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

Sir S. Odd, madam, I love you—and if you would take my advice in a husband——

Ang. Hold, hold, Sir Sampson, I asked your advice for a husband, and you are giving me your consent. I was indeed thinking to propose something like it in jest, to satisfy you about Valentine; for if a match were seemingly carried on between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me; for, you know, he has long pretended a passion for me.

Sir S. Gadzooks, a most ingenious contrivance—if we were to go through with it!—But why must the match only be seemingly carried on? Odd, let it be a real contract.

Ang. O fie, Sir Sampson, what would the world say?

Sir S. Say! They would say you were a wise woman, and I a happy man. Odd, madam, I'll love you as long as I live, and leave you a good jointure when I die.

Ang. Ay: but that is not in your power, Sir Sampson, for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

Sir S. Odd, you're cunning, a wary baggage. Faith

and troth, I like you the better. But, I warrant you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favour of myself. Body o'me, I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue male of our two bodies begotten. Odsbud, let us find children, and I'll find an estate.

Ang. Will you! Well, do you find the estate, and leave the other to me.

Sir S. O rogue! but I'll trust you. And will you consent? Is it a match then?

Ang. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obligation; and if I find what you propose practicable, I'll give you my answer.

Sir S. With all my heart. Come in with me, and I'll lend you the bond.—Odso, here's somebody coming. [*Exeunt*

Enter TATTLE *and* JEREMY.

Tatt. Is not that she, gone out just now?

Jer. Ay, sir, she's just going to the place of appointment.

Tatt. Egad, thou art a pretty fellow. But I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

Jer. O, sir, for that, sir, 'tis my chief talent; I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.

Tatt. Ay! who's he, though? A privy counsellor?

Jer. O ignorance! [*Aside.*] A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms could overrun the country, yet nobody could ever find out his head quarters.

Tatt. Close dog! a rare fellow amongst the wenches, I warrant him!—The time draws nigh, Jeremy, Angelica will be veiled like a nun, and I must be hobbed like a friar, ha, Jeremy?

Jer. Ay, sir, hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be so dressed; and she is so in love with him, she'll comply with any thing to please him. Poor lady! I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what a happy change she has.

made, between a madman and so accomplished a gentleman.

Tatt. Ay, faith, so she will, Jeremy: you're a good friend to her, poor creature! I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration of myself, as compassion to her.

Jer. 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with sixty thousand pounds from throwing herself away.

Tatt. So 'tis, faith! I might have saved several others in my time, but, egad, I could never find in my heart to marry any body before.

Jer. Well, sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming; and meet you in half a quarter of an hour, with your disguise, at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly;—she won't distinguish the tone of your voice.

Tatt. No, no, let me alone for a counterfeit. I'll be ready for you. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Enter MISS PRUE.

Miss P. O, Mr. Tattle, are you here? I am glad I have found you. I have been looking up and down for you like any thing, till I'm as tired as any thing in the world.

Tatt. O plague! how shall I get rid of this foolish girl? [*Aside.*

Miss P. O, I have pure news, I can tell you pure news—I must not marry the seaman now—My father says so. Why won't you be my husband? You say you love me! and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now, if you please.

Tatt. O fie, miss!—who told you so, child?

Miss P. Why, my father—I told him that you loved me.

Tatt. O fie, miss! why did you do so?—and who told you so, child?

Miss P. Who! why you did, did not you?

Tatt. O plague!—that was yesterday, miss; that was a great while ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

Miss P. Pshaw! O but I dreamt that it was so, though.

Tatt. Ay, but your father will tell you, that dreams come by contraries, child. O fie! what, we must not love one another now. Pshaw, that would be a foolish thing indeed! Fie, fie! you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning, and forget him every night. No, no, to marry is to be a child again, and play with the same rattle always: O fie, marrying is a paw thing!

Miss P. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night then?

Tatt. No, no, child, you would not have me.

Miss P. No? Yes but I would, though.

Tatt. Pshaw, but I tell you, you would not. You forget you are a woman, and don't know your own mind.

Miss P. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

Enter FORESIGHT.

For. Oh, Mr. Tattle, your servant, you are a close man; but methinks your love to my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with!—or had you a mind to try if I could discover it by my art?—Hum, ha! I think there is something in your physiognomy, that has a resemblance of her; and the girl is like me.

Tatt. And so you would infer, that you and I are alike—What does the old prig mean? I'll banter him, and laugh at him, and leave him. [*Aside.*]—I fancy you have a wrong notion of faces.

For. How? what? a wrong notion! how so?

Tatt. In the way of art, I have some taking features, not obvious to vulgar eyes, that are indication of a sudden turn of good fortune in the lottery of

wives; and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me, by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity, from all astrologers, and the stars themselves.

For. How? I will make it appear that what you say is impossible.

Tatt. Sir, I beg your pardon, I am in haste—

For. For what?

Tatt. To be married, sir—married.

For. Ay, but pray take me along with you, sir.

Tatt. No, sir; it is to be done privately—I never make confidants.

For. Well; but my consent, I mean—You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

Tatt. Who, I, sir? I am an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

For. Heyday! What time of the moon is this?

Tatt. Very true, sir; and desire to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter, than I have likeness of you: and I have a secret in my heart, which you would be glad to know, and shan't know: and yet you shall know it, too, and be sorry for it afterwards. I'd have you know, sir, that I am as knowing as the stars, and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet did not know of it half an hour ago, and the lady stays for me, and does not know of it yet. There's a mystery for you! I know you love to untie difficulties. Or, if you can't solve this, stay here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you. [*Exit.*

Miss P. Oh, father, why will you let him go? Won't you make him to be my husband?

For. Mercy on us, what do these lunacies portend? Alas! he's mad, child, stark wild.

Miss P. What, and must not I have e'er a husband then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed, but I won't. For, now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other.

THE

BRITISH THEATRE

BEN — LOOK YOU, YOUNG WOMAN, YOU MAY LEARN
TO OUT-LORD WORLD HOWEVER
BACK IT

For. Oh, fearful! I think the girl's influenced too.——Hussy, you shall have a rod.

Miss P. A fiddle of a rod! I'll have a husband; and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin, the butler! he says he loves me: and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband: I warrant he'll be my husband, and thank me too; for he told me so.

Enter NURSE.

For. Did he so? I'll dispatch him for it presently! Rogue! Oh, Nurse, come hither.

Nurse. What is your worship's pleasure?

For. Here, take your young mistress, and lock her up presently, till farther orders from me. Not a word, hussy—Do what I bid you. No reply: away! and bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, d'ye hear? Be gone, when I bid you.

[*Exeunt* NURSE *and* MISS PRUE.

Enter MRS. FORESIGHT *and* SCANDAL.

Mrs. For. What's the matter, husband?

For. 'Tis not convenient to tell you now——Mr. Scandal, Heaven keep us all in our senses! I fear there is a contagious frenzy abroad. How does Valentine?

Scand. O, I hope he will do well again. I have a message from him to your niece Angelica.

For. I think she has not returned, since she went abroad with Sir Sampson.

Enter BEN.

Here's Mr. Benjamin; he can tell us if his father be come home.

Ben. Who? Father? Ay, he's come home with a vengeance!

Mrs. For. Why, what's the matter?

Ben. Matter! Why, he's mad.

For. Mercy on us! I was afraid of this.

Ben. And there's a handsome young woman, she,

as they say, brother Val went mad for;—she's mad too, I think.

For. O my poor niece! my poor niece! is she gone too? Well, I shall run mad next.

Mrs. For. Well, but how mad? how d'ye mean?

Ben. Nay, I'll give you leave to guess—I'll undertake to make a voyage to Antigua.——No, I mayn't say so, neither——but I'll sail as far as Leghorn, and back again, before you shall guess at the matter, and do nothing else. Mess, you may take in all the points of the compass, and not hit the right.

Mrs. For. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

Ben. Why, then I'll tell you:—there's a new wedding upon the stocks, and they two are a-going to be married to rights.

Scand. Who?

Ben. Why, father, and—the young woman, I can't hit her name.

Scand. Angelica?

Ben. Ay, the same.

Mrs. For. Sir Sampson and Angelica? Impossible!

Ben. That may be—but I'm sure it is as I tell you.

Scand. 'Sdeath! it is a jest. I can't believe it.

Ben. Look you, friend; it is nothing to me, whether you believe it or no. What I say is true, d'ye see; they are married, or just going to be married, I know not which.

For. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic?

Ben. I don't know what you may call madness—but she's mad for a husband, and he's horn-mad, I think, or they'd never make a match together.—Here they come.

Enter SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir S. Where's this old soothsayer? this uncle of mine elect!—Aha! old Foresight! uncle Foresight! wish me joy, uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer: here's a conjunction that was

not foretold in all your Ephemeres! The brightest star in the blue firmament—is shot from above; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Odd, you're an old fellow, Foresight, uncle I mean; a very old fellow, uncle Foresight; and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding; faith and troth you shall. Odd, we'll have the music of the spheres for thee, old Lilly, that we will; and thou shalt lead up a dance in *via lactea*.

For. I'm thunderstruck! You are not married to my niece?

Sir S. Not absolutely married, uncle; but very near it; within a kiss of the matter, as you see.

[*Kisses* ANGELICA.

Ang. 'Tis very true indeed, uncle; I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

Sir S. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes.

Scand. Death and hell! Where's Valentine?

[*Exit.*

Mrs. For. This is so surprising—

Sir S. How! What does my aunt say? surprising, aunt? not at all, for a young couple to make a match in winter! Not at all—It's a plot to undermine cold weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed, called a warming-pan.

Mrs. For. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, Sir Sampson.

Ben. Mess, I fear his fire's little better than tinder.

Sir S. Why, you impudent tarpaulin! sirrah, do you bring your forecastle jests upon your father? But I shall be even with you; I won't give you a groat. Mr. Buckram, is the conveyance so worded, that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate, though there were no way to come to it but by the north-east passage.

Buck. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions; there is not the least cranny of the law unstopped.

Ben. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and

leak unstopped in your conscience! If so be that one had a pump to your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say a witch will sail in a sieve—but I believe the devil would not venture aboard your conscience. And that's for you.

Sir S. Hold your tongue, sirrah.—How now? who's here?

Enter MRS. FRAIL *and* TATTLE.

Mrs. F. O, sister, the most unlucky accident!

Mrs. For. What's the matter?

Tatt. O, the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world we are!

For. Bless us! how so?

Mrs. F. Ah, Mr. Tattle and I, poor Mr. Tattle and I are—I can't speak it out.

Tatt. Nor I——But poor Mrs. Frail and I are——

Mrs. F. Married.

For. Married! how?

Tatt. Suddenly——before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, trick'd us into one another.

For. Why, you told me just now, you went hence in haste to be married!

Ang. But, I believe Mr. Tattle meant the favour for me, I thank him.

Tatt. I did, as I hope to be saved, madam; my intentions were good.——But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore. The devil take me, if ever I was so much concerned at any thing in my life.

Ang. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

Tatt. The least in the world——that is, for my part, I speak for myself. Gad, I never had the least thought of serious kindness—I never liked any body less in my life. Poor woman! Gad, I'm sorry for her too; for I have no reason to hate her neither; but I believe I shall lead her a damned sort of a life.

Mrs. For. He's better than no husband at all—— though he's a coxcomb. [*To* MRS. FRAIL.

Mrs. F. [*To* MRS. FORESIGHT.] Ay, ay, it's well it's no worse. Nay, for my part, I always despised Mr. Tattle of all things; nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

Tatt. Look you there, I thought as much! Plague on't, I wish we could keep it secret; why, I don't believe any of this company would speak of it.

Ben. If you suspect me, friend, I'll go out of the room.

Mrs. F. But, my dear, that's impossible; the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

Tatt. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

Ang. O, you'll agree very well in a little time; custom will make it easy for you.

Tatt. Easy! Plague on't, I don't believe I shall sleep to-night.

Sir S. Sleep, quotha! No, why, you would not sleep on your wedding night? I'm an older fellow than you, and don't mean to sleep.

Ben. Why, there's another match now, as thof a couple of privateers were looking for a prize, and should fall foul of one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going—for that you must expect; I have experience of her—when she's going, let her go. For no matrimony is tough enough to hold her; and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that. Who's here? the madman?

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.

Val. No; here's the fool; and if occasion be, I'll give it under my hand.

Sir. S. How now?

Val. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

Sir S. What, have you found your senses at last then? In good time, sir.

Val. You were abused, sir; I never was distracted.

For. How? not mad, Mr. Scandal?

Scand. No, really, sir; I'm his witness, it was all counterfeit.

Val. I thought I had reasons——but it was a poor contrivance: the effect has shown it such.

Sir S. Contrivance! what, to cheat me? to cheat your father! Sirrah, could you hope to prosper?

Val. Indeed, I thought, sir, when the father endeavoured to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

Sir S. Very good, sir. Mr. Buckram, are you ready? Come, sir, will you sign and seal?

Val. If you please, sir; but first I would ask this lady one question.

Sir S. Sir, you must ask me leave first——That lady! No, sir; you shall ask that lady no questions, till you have asked her blessing, sir; that lady is to be my wife.

Val. I have heard as much, sir; but I would have it from her own mouth.

Sir S. That's as much as to say, I lie, sir; and you don't believe what I say.

Val. Pardon me, sir. But I reflect, that I very lately counterfeited madness: I don't know but the frolic may go round.

Sir S. Come, chuck, satisfy him, answer him.——Come, Mr. Buckram, the pen and ink.

Buck. Here it is, sir, with the deed; all is ready.

[VALENTINE *goes to* ANGELICA.

Ang. 'Tis true, you have a great while pretended love to me; nay, what if you were sincere? Still you must pardon me, if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person, than yours.

Sir S. Are you answered now, sir?

Val. Yes, sir.

Sir S. Where's your plot, sir? and your contriv-

ance now, sir? Will you sign, sir? Come, will you sign and seal, sir?

Val. With all my heart, sir.

Scand. 'Sdeath, you are not mad, indeed? to ruin yourself?

Val. I have been disappointed of my only hope; and he, that loses hope, may part with any thing. I never valued fortune, but as it was subservient to my pleasure; and my only pleasure was to please this lady: I have made many vain attempts; and find at last that nothing but my ruin can effect it; which, for that reason, I will sign to.——Give me the paper.

Ang. Generous Valentine! [*Aside.*

Buck. Here is the deed, sir.

Val. But where is the bond, by which I am obliged to sign this?

Buck. Sir Sampson, you have it.

Ang. No, I have it; and I'll use it, as I would every thing that is an enemy to Valentine.

[*Tears the Paper.*

Sir S. How now?

Val. Ha!

Ang. Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion. Here's my hand; my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue. [*To* VALENTINE.

Val. Between pleasure and amazement, I am lost—but on my knees I take the blessing.

Sir S. Oons, what is the meaning of this?

Ben. Mess, here's the wind changed again. Father, you and I may make a voyage together now!

Ang. Well, Sir Sampson, since I have played you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature; and it is hardly more pleasure to me, that I can make him and myself happy, than that I can punish you.

Sir S. Oons, you're a crocodile.

For. Really, Sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

Sir S. You're an illiterate old fool; and I'm another. The stars are liars; and if I had breath, I'd curse them and you, myself, and all the world.

Tatt. Sir, sir, if you are in all this disorder for want of a wife, I can spare you mine.

Sir S. Confound you and your wife together.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Tatt. Oh, are you there, sir? I am indebted to you for my happiness. [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons: it was an arrant mistake. You see, sir, my master was never mad, nor any thing like it.—Then how can it be otherwise?

Val. Tattle, I thank you: you would have interposed between me and heaven; but Providence laid purgatory in your way. You have but justice.

Scand. [*To* ANGELICA.] Well, madam, you have done exemplary justice, in punishing an inhuman father, and rewarding a faithful lover: but there is a third good work, which I, in particular, must thank you for: I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me——for now I am convinced that all women are not, like fortune, blind in bestowing favours, either on those who do not merit, or who do not want them.

Ang. It is an unreasonable accusation that you lay upon our sex. You tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love; but few have the constancy to stay till it becomes your due. How few, like Valentine, would persevere even to martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their constancy? In admiring me, you misplace the novelty.

The miracle to-day is, that we find
A lover true; not that a woman's kind. [*Exeunt.*

THE END.

MOURNING BRIDE

ALMERIA ——— GIVE ME THAT RICH
WHO DOST THOU HEAVE AND HELP IN THE DRIFT
AS OUR ——— SCENE I.

Painted by Smirke. Pub. by Longman & Co 1818. Engraved by C. Heath.

THE

MOURNING BRIDE;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By WILLIAM CONGREVE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

COVENT GARDEN AND DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

REMARKS.

THIS is a Tragedy, which engages the attention, pleases the ear, and charms the eye, but never touches the heart.

Love is a fervid passion to feel, but an insipid one to see. Imagination, fancy, whim, a kind of enchanting influence, presides over this tender emotion of the mind; but persons, on whom its magic has no immediate power, look coldly upon those ideal joys and sorrows, which the lover considers as realities.

Love, in this play, is, however, substantiated by wedlock, which is no chimera:—still the marriage of Alphonso and Almeria is merely bridal; neither cemented by long friendship, offspring, or any of those positive ties of affection, which would infallibly win the audience to sympathize in their mutual fondness.

"The Mourning Bride" is fortunate in an attractive title, and more fortunate in the name of its author.

A tragedy from the pen of the first comic writer of the age, was, at the time it was announced, (1691,) a subject of respect and curiosity. The learned and critical part of the town crowded the theatre on the first night, and had, at least, some of their senses charmed, for the play had an unequivocal good reception. The great Dryden was present, and is said

to have been enraptured. But it is with poets as with politicians; few persons are sufficiently independent of fortune or affections, to speak exactly what they think on public topics; and where it is held prudent to disguise thoughts, it is surely discreet to pay little regard to words.

Churchill calls "The Mourning Bride" a pantomime. Dr Johnson gives it the extreme praise of containing, in the following speech of Almeria, (when she visits the vaulted aisle, to behold the tomb of Anselmo,) an image the most poetical of any in the English language.

"How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,
"Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
"To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
"By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
"Looking tranquillity!—It strikes an awe
"And terror on my aching sight.—The tombs
"And monumental caves of death look cold,
"And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart!"

Whatever merit this tragedy possesses, it is certain that its being placed upon the list of acting plays at present, is wholly to be ascribed to the magnificent representation of Zara by Mrs Siddons.

Mrs H. Siddons has every grace and sensibility requisite for the part of Almeria.

There is but one male character in this play worthy the talents of a superior actor; nor will some actors allow that one: Osmyn (or Alphonso) is not a fa-

vourite with any performer. Garrick had great spirit and fire in every scene of the part—but not the fire of love. Kemble has not even the sparks. Yet Kemble looks nobly, majestically, in Osmyn; and reminds the audience of the lines just quoted,

——" Tall pillar rear its marble head,
" Looking tranquillity.——
" And shoots a chillness to the trembling heart!"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	COVENT GARDEN.	DRURY LANE.
Spaniards.		
MANUEL, KING OF GRANADA	*Mr Murray.*	*Mr Aickin.*
GONSALEZ	*Mr Cory.*	*Mr Packer.*
GARCIA	*Mr Brunton.*	*Mr Holland.*
PEREZ	*Mr Davenport.*	*Mr Trueman.*
ALONZO	*Mr Chapman.*	*Mr Surmont.*
OFFICERS	*Messrs L. Bologna, Field, Lee, and Lewiss.*	
ALMERIA, PRINCESS OF GRANADA	*Mrs H. Siddons.*	*Mrs Powell.*
LEONORA	*Mrs Humphries.*	*Miss Tidswell.*
Moors.		
OSMYN	*Mr Kemble.*	*Mr Kemble.*
HELI	*Mr Creswell.*	*Mr Maddocks.*
SELIM	*Mr Claremont.*	*Mr Caulfield.*
OFFICERS	*Messrs Harley, Jefferies, Powers, and Sarjant.*	
MUTES	*Messrs Abbot, Ratchford, Trueman, and Wilde.*	
ZARA	*Mrs Siddons.*	*Mrs Siddons.*
LADIES	*Mesdames Bologna, Bologna, Burnet, Cox, Dibdin, Follet, Frederick, and Price.*	

SCENE,—Granada.

THE

MOURNING BRIDE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room of State. The Curtain rising slowly to soft Music, discovers ALMERIA *in Mourning,* LEONORA *waiting.*

After the Music, ALMERIA *rises from her Chair and comes forward.*

Alm. Music has charms to sooth a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read, that things inanimate have moved,
And, as with living souls, have been inform'd
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown
Than trees or flint? O, force of constant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.
Anselmo sleeps, and is at peace; last night
The silent tomb received the good old King;
He, and his sorrows, now are safely lodged
Within its cold, but hospitable, bosom.
Why am not I at peace?

Leon. Dear madam, cease,
Or moderate your grief; there is no cause——
Alm. No cause!—Peace, peace; there is eternal cause,
And misery eternal will succeed.
Thou canst not tell—thou hast indeed no cause.
Leon. Believe me, madam, I lament Anselmo,
And always did compassionate his fortune;
Have often wept, to see how cruelly
Your father kept in chains his fellow king:
And oft, at night, when all have been retired,
Have stolen from bed, and to his prison crept:
Where, while his gaoler slept, I through the grate
Have softly whisper'd, and enquired his health;
Sent in my sighs and prayers for his deliverance;
For sighs and prayers were all that I could offer.
Alm. Indeed thou hast a soft and gentle nature,
That thus could melt to see a stranger's wrongs.
O, Leonora, hadst thou known Anselmo,
How would thy heart have bled to see his sufferings!
Thou hadst no cause, but general compassion.
Leon. Love of my royal mistress gave me cause;
My love of you begot my grief for him;
For I had heard, that when the chance of war
Had bless'd Anselmo's arms with victory,
And the rich spoil of all the field, and you,
The glory of the whole, were made the prey
Of his success; that then, in spite of hate,
Revenge, and that hereditary feud
Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,
He did endear himself to your affection,
By all the worthy and indulgent ways
His most industrious goodness could invent;
Proposing, by a match between Alphonso
His son, the brave Valentian prince, and you,
To end the long dissension, and unite
The jarring crowns.

Alm. Why was I carried to Anselmo's court?
Or there, why was I used so tenderly?
O, Alphonso, Alphonso!
Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight,
No time shall raze thee from my memory;
The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb;
But in my heart thou art interr'd; there, there
Thy dear resemblance is for ever fix'd;
My love, my lord, my husband still, though lost.

Leon. Husband!—O Heavens!

Alm. Alas! what have I said!
My grief has hurry'd me beyond all thought.
I would have kept that secret; though I know
Thy love and faith to me deserve all confidence.

Leon. Witness these tears——

Alm. I thank thee, Leonora——
Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress:
For 'tis, alas! the poor prerogative
Of greatness to be wretched, and unpitied.

Leon. The memory of that brave prince stands fair
In all report——
And I have heard imperfectly his loss;
But, fearful to renew your troubles past,
I never did presume to ask the story.

Alm. If for my swelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,
E'en on that day when Manuel, my father,
Led on his conqu'ring troops high as the gates
Of King Anselmo's palace; which, in rage,
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fired.
The good King, flying to avoid the flames,
Started amidst his foes, and made captivity
His fatal refuge—Would that I had fall'n
Amidst those flames—but 'twas not so decreed.
Alphonso, who foresaw my father's cruelty,
Had borne the queen and me on board a ship,
Ready to sail; and when this news was brought,

We put to sea; but being betray'd by some
Who knew our flight, we closely were pursued,
And almost taken; when a sudden storm
Drove us, and those that follow'd, on the coast
Of Afric: There our vessel struck the shore,
And, bulging 'gainst a rock, was dash'd in pieces;
But Heaven spared me for yet much more affliction!
Conducting them who follow'd us, to shun
The shore, and save me floating on the waves:
While the good queen and my Alphonso perish'd.

Leon. Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonso?

Alm. That day, that fatal day, our hands were join'd.
For when my lord beheld the ship pursuing,
And saw her rate so far exceeding ours,
He came to me, and begg'd me by my love,
I would consent the priest should make us one
That whether death or victory ensued,
I might be his, beyond the power of fate;
The queen too did assist his suit—I granted:
And in one day was wedded and a widow.

[*Trumpets and Drums at a Distance.*

Leon. Hark!
Those distant sounds proclaim your father's triumph.
O cease, for Heaven's sake, assuage a little
This torrent of your grief, for this I fear;
'Twill urge his wrath, to see you drown'd in tears,
When joy appears in every other face.

Alm. And joy he brings to every other heart,
But double, double weight of woe to mine:
For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom
I must be sacrificed, and all the vows
I gave my dear Alphonso basely broken.
No, it shall never be; for I will die
First, die ten thousand deaths—Look down, look down,
Alphonso, hear the sacred vow I make; [*Kneels.*

Behold thou also, and attend my vow,
If ever I do yield, or give consent,
By any action, word, or thought, to wed
Another lord, may then just Heaven shower down
Unheard-of curses on me; greater far
(If such there be in angry Heaven's vengeance)
Than any I have yet endured—And now [*Rising.*
My heart has some relief; having so well
Discharged this debt, incumbent on my love.
Yet, one thing more I would engage from thee.

Leon. My heart, my life, and will, are only yours.

Alm. I thank thee. 'Tis but this: anon, when all
Are wrapp'd and busied in the general joy,
Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me
Steal forth to visit good Anselmo's tomb.

Leon. Alas! I fear some fatal resolution.

Alm. No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,
Nor violence—I feel myself more light,
And more at large, since I have made this vow.
Perhaps I would repeat it there more solemnly.

Leon. I will attend you.

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. The Lord Gonsalez comes to tell your highness,
The King is just arrived.

Alm. Conduct him in.— [*Exit* ALONZO.
That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,
To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds;
And gild and magnify his son's exploits.
But I am arm'd with ice around my heart,
Not to be warm'd with words, or idle eloquence.

Enter GONSALEZ *and Two* GENTLEMEN.

Gon. Be ev'ry day of your long life like this.
Your royal father, my victorious lord,
Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,

Is ent'ring now, in martial pomp, the palace.
Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.
Chariots of war, adorn'd with glitt'ring gems,
Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,
White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills,
That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,
As they disdain'd the victory they grace.
Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow:
And captains of the noblest blood of Afric
Sweat by his chariot wheel.
The swarming populace spread every wall,
While you alone retire, and shun this sight.

Alm. My lord, my eyes ungratefully behold
The gilded trophies of exterior honours;
Nor will my ears be charm'd with sounding words,
Or pompous phrase, the pageantry of souls.
But that my father is return'd in safety,
I bend to Heaven with thanks and humble praises.

Gon. Excellent princess!
But 'tis a task unfit for my weak age
With dying words to offer at your praise.
Garcia, my son, your beauty's lowest slave,
Has better done, in proving with his sword
The force and influence of your matchless charms.

Alm. I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,
Which had been brave, though I had ne'er been born.

Gon. Madam, the King. [*Flourish.*

SCENE II.

Symphony of warlike Music.

Enter the KING, *attended by* GARCIA *and several* OFFICERS. *Files of* PRISONERS *in Chains, and* GUARDS, *who are ranged in order round the Stage.* ALMERIA *meets the* KING, *and kneels; afterwards* GONSALEZ *kneels and kisses the* KING'S *Hand, while* GARCIA *does the same to the* PRINCESS.

King. Almeria, rise—My best Gonsalez, rise.
What, tears! my good old friend——
Gon. But tears of joy;
Believe me, sir, to see you thus, has fill'd
Mine eyes with more delight than they can hold.
King. By Heaven, thou lovest me, and I'm pleased
thou dost;
Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice
To see thee weep on this occasion——Some
Here are, who seem to mourn at our success!
Why is't, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,
Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?
Alm. Forgive me, sir, if I in this offend.
The year, which I have vow'd to pay to Heaven,
In mourning and strict life, for my deliv'rance
From wreck and death, wants yet to be expired.
King. Your zeal to Heaven is great, so is your debt:
Yet something too is due to me, who gave
That life, which Heaven preserved. A day bestow'd
In filial duty, had atoned, and given
A dispensation to your vow—No more!

'Twas weak and wilful—and a woman's error.
Yet, upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,
To see that sable worn upon the day,
Succeeding that, in which our deadliest foe,
Hated Anselmo, was interr'd—By Heaven,
It looks as thou didst mourn for him: just so
Thy senseless vow appear'd to bear its date;
Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserved,
But that wherein the cursed Alphonso perish'd.
Ha! What? thou dost not weep to think of that!

Gon. Have patience, royal sir; the princess weeps
To have offended you. If fate decreed,
One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss,
And her deliverance, is she to blame?

King. I tell thee, she's to blame, not to have feasted
When my first foe was laid in earth; such enmity,
Such detestation bears my blood to his,
My daughter should have revell'd at his death.
Retire; divest yourself with speed
Of that offensive black;—on me be all
The violation of your vow; for you,
It shall be your excuse, that I command it.

Gar. [*Kneeling.*] Your pardon, sir, if I presume so far,
As to remind you of your gracious promise.

King. Rise, Garcia—I forgot.——Yet stay, Almeria——

Alm. My boding heart!—What is your pleasure, sir?

King. Draw near, and give your hand, and, Garcia, yours:
Receive this lord, as one whom I have found
Worthy to be your husband, and my son.

Gar. Thus let me kneel to take—O not to take—
But to devote and yield myself for ever
The slave and creature of my royal mistress.

Gon. O let me prostrate pay my worthless thanks—

King. No more; my promise long since pass'd, thy services,
And Garcia's well-tried valour, all oblige me.
This day we triumph; but to-morrow's sun,
Garcia, shall shine to grace thy nuptials——
Alm. Oh! [*Faints.*
Gar. She faints! help to support her.
King. How is't, Almeria?
Alm. A sudden chillness seizes on my spirits.
Your leave, sir, to retire.
King. Garcia, conduct her.
[GARCIA *leads* ALMERIA *to the Door, and returns.*
This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears.
Now, what would Alonzo?

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arrived,
And with a train as if she still were wife
To Albucazim, and the Moor had conquer'd.
King. It is our will she should be so attended.
[*Exit* ALONZO.
Garcia, what is he,
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?
Gar. Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,
Great sir, at her request, attends on Zara.
King. He is your prisoner; as you please dispose him.
Gar. I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness;
And with a haughty mien, and stern civility,
Dumbly declines all offers. If he speak,
'Tis scarce above a word; as he were born
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk;
At least to talk where he must not command.
King. Such sullenness, and in a man so brave,

Must have some other cause than his captivity.
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?
Gar. My lord, she did.
King. That, join'd with his behaviour,
Begets a doubt. I'd have them watch'd; perhaps
Her chains hang heavier on him than his own.

[*March.*]

Enter ALONZO, ZARA, *and* OSMYN, *bound, conducted by* PEREZ *and a* GUARD, *and attended by* SELIM *and several* MUTES *and* EUNUCHS *in a Train.*

King. What welcome, and what honours, beauteous Zara,
A king and conqueror can give, are yours.
A conqueror indeed, where you are won;
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,
That had our pomp been with your presence graced,
Th' expecting crowd had been deceived; and seen
The monarch enter, not triumphant, but
In pleasing triumph led; your beauty's slave.
Zar. If I on any terms could condescend
To like captivity, or think those honours,
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,
Of equal value with unborrow'd rule,
And native right to arbitrary sway,
I might be pleased, when I behold this train
With usual homage wait; but when I feel
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself,
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid
Beneath mock praises, and dissembled state.
King. Those bonds! 'Twas my command you should be free.
How durst you, Perez, disobey?
Perez. Great sir,
Your order was, she should not wait your triumph,
But at some distance follow, thus attended.

King. 'Tis false; 'twas more; I bid she should be free;
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.
Her eyes did more than bid——Free her and hers
With speed—yet stay—my hands alone can make
Fit restitution here——Thus I release you,
And by releasing you, enslave myself.
Zar. Such thanks, as one hating to be obliged——
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,
I offer.
King. Born to excel, and to command!
As by transcendent beauty to attract
All eyes, so by pre-eminence of soul
To rule all hearts.
Garcia, what's he, who with contracted brow,
[*Beholding* OSMYN, *as they unbind him.*
And sullen port, glooms downwards with his eyes;
At once regardless of his chains or liberty?
Gar. That, sir, is he of whom I spoke; that's Osmyn.
King. He answers well the character you gave him.
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man
So great in arms, as thou art said to be,
So hardly can endure captivity,
The common chance of war?
Osm. Because captivity
Has robb'd me of a dear and just revenge.
King. I understand not that.
Osm. I would not have you.
Zar. That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend,
Whom more than life he loved; and the regret
Of not revenging on his foes that loss,
Has caused this melancholy and despair.
King. She does excuse him; 'tis as I suspected.
[*To* GONSALEZ.
Gon. That friend might be herself; seem not to heed

His arrogant reply: she looks concern'd.
King. I'll have enquiry made; perhaps his friend
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name?
Zar. Heli.
King. Garcia, that search shall be your care:
It shall be mine to pay devotion here;
At this fair shrine to lay my laurels down,
And raise love's altar on the spoils of war.
Conquest and triumph, now, are mine no more;
Nor will I victory in camps adore:
Fickle in fields, unsteadily she flies,
But rules with settled sway in Zara's eyes. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Aisle of a Temple.

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Alm. It was a fancy'd noise, for all is hush'd.
Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling through hollows of this vaulted aisle.
We'll listen——
No, all is hush'd, and still as death—'tis dreadful!
How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,

Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity!—It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight. The tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart!
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me; and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

Leon. Let us return; the horror of this place
And silence will increase your melancholy.

Alm. It may my fears, but cannot add to that.
No, I will on; show me Anselmo's tomb,
Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead on,
Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again
To him, to Heaven, and my Alphonso's soul.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter HELI.

Heli. I wander through this maze of monuments,
Yet cannot find him—Hark! sure 'tis the voice
Of one complaining—There it sounds—I'll follow it.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Place of Tombs: one Monument in Front greater than the rest. The Door of it open.

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

Leon. Behold the sacred vault, within whose womb
The poor remains of good Anselmo rest,
Yet fresh and unconsumed by time or worms.
What do I see? Oh, Heavens! either my eyes
Are false, or still the marble door remains

Unclosed; the iron gates, that lead to death
Beneath, are still wide stretch'd upon their hinge,
And staring on us with unfolded leaves.

Alm. Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me;
And that dumb mouth, significant in show,
Invites me to the bed, where I alone
Shall rest; shows me the grave, where nature, weary
And long oppress'd with woes and bending cares,
May lay the burden down, and sink in slumbers
Of peace eternal. My father then
Will cease his tyranny; and Garcia too
Will fly my pale deformity with loathing.
My soul, enlarged from its vile bonds, will mount
To that refulgent world, where I shall swim
In liquid light, and float on seas of bliss
To my Alphonso's soul. Oh, joy too great!
Oh, ecstacy of thought! Help me, Anselmo;
Help me, Alphonso;
To thee, to thee I call, to thee, Alphonso:
Oh, Alphonso!

Osm. [*Within the Tomb.*] Who calls that wretched thing, that was Alphonso?

Alm. Angels, and all the host of Heaven, support me!

Osm. Whence is that voice, whose shrillness from the grave,

Enter OSMYN *from the Tomb.*

And growing to his father's shroud, roots up
Alphonso?

Alm. Mercy! Providence!

Osm. Amazement and illusion!
Rivet and nail me where I stand, ye powers,
[*Coming forward.*
That, motionless, I may be still deceived.
Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve
That tender, lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;

I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she herself!
It is Almeria, 'tis my wife!

Enter HELI.

Leon. Alas! she stirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes!
Hel. Ha! 'tis he! and with Almeria!
Osm. Look up, Almeria, bless me with thy eyes;
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy husband.
Alm. I've sworn I'll not wed Garcia: why d'ye force me?
Is this a father?
Osm. Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia:
Nor am I what I seem, but thy Alphonso.
Alm. It is, it is Alphonso! 'tis his face,
His voice; I know him now, I know him all.
Oh, how hast thou return'd? How hast thou charm'd
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this?
That thus relenting they have given thee back
To earth, to light and life, to love and me.
It is too much! too much to bear, and live!
Osm. Thou excellence, thou joy, thou heaven of love!
Alm. Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?
Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise?
Osm. I did, and thou, my love, didst call me; thou.
Alm. True; but how camest thou there? Wert thou alone?
Osm. I was, and lying on my father's lead,
When broken echoes of a distant voice
Disturb'd the sacred silence of the vault
In murmurs round my head. I rose and listen'd,
And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso;
I thought I saw thee too; but, oh, I thought not
That I indeed should be so blest to see thee———

Alm. But still, how camest thou thither? How thus?——Ha!
What's he, who, like thyself, is started here
Ere seen?
Osm. Where? Ha! What do I see, Antonio!
I'm fortunate indeed——my friend, too, safe!
Heli. Most happily, in finding you thus bless'd.
Alm. More miracles! Antonio too, escaped!
Osm. And twice escaped; both from the rage of seas
And war: for in the fight I saw him fall.
Heli. But fell unhurt, a pris'ner as yourself,
And as yourself made free; hither I came,
Impatiently to seek you, where I knew
Your grief would lead you to lament Anselmo.
Leon. Or I'm deceived, or I beheld the glimpse
Of two in shining habits cross the aisle;
Who, by their pointing, seem to mark this place.
[*Exit* HELI.
Alm. Sure I have dreamt, if we must part so soon.
Osm. I wish at least our parting were a dream;
Or we could sleep till we again were met.

Enter HELI.

Heli. Zara with Selim, sir, I saw and know them:
You must be quick, for love will lend her wings.
Alm. What love! Who is she? Why are you alarm'd?
Osm. She's the reverse of thee; she's my unhappiness.
Harbour no thought that may disturb thy peace;
Retire, my love, I'll think how we may meet
To part no more; my friend will tell thee all;
How I escaped, how I am here, and thus;
How I'm not call'd Alphonso now, but Osmyn;
And he Heli. All, all, he will unfold,
Ere next we meet——
Alm. Sure we shall meet again——

Osm. We shall; we part not but to meet again.
Gladness and warmth of ever-kindling love
Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in absence.
[*Exeunt* ALM. LEON. *and* HELL.
Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.
Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thoughts,
So shall you still behold her.

Enter ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zar. See where he stands, folded and fix'd to earth,
A statue among statues.—
Why, cruel Osmyn, dost thou fly me thus?
Am I more loathsome to thee than the grave,
That thou dost seek to shield thee there, and shun
My love? But to the grave I'll follow thee—
He looks not, minds not, hears not! barb'rous man!
Am I neglected thus? Am I despised,
Not heard! Ungrateful Osmyn!

Osm. Ha, 'tis Zara!

Zar. Yes, traitor; Zara, lost, abandon'd Zara,
Is a regardless suppliant now to Osmyn.
The slave, the wretch that she redeem'd from death,
Disdains to listen now, or look on Zara.

Osm. Far be the guilt of such reproaches from me;
Lost in myself, and blinded by my thoughts,
I saw you not till now.

Zar. Now then you see me—
But with such dumb and thankless eyes you look,
Better I were unseen, than seen thus coldly.

Osm. What would you from a wretch who came to mourn,
And for his sorrow chose this solitude?
Look round; joy is not here, nor cheerfulness.
You have pursued misfortune to its dwelling,
Yet look for gaiety and gladness there.

Zar. Inhuman! Why, why dost thou rack me thus?
And, with perverseness, from the purpose, answer?

What is't to me, this house of misery?
What joy do I require? if thou dost mourn,
I come to mourn with thee, to share thy griefs,
And give thee, for them, in exchange, my love.
Osm. Oh, that's the greatest grief—I am so poor,
I have not wherewithal to give again.
Zar. Thou hast a heart, though 'tis a savage one;
Give it me as it is; I ask no more
For all I've done, and all I have endured;
For saving thee, when I beheld thee first,
Driven by the tide upon my country's coast,
Pale and expiring, drench'd in briny waves,
Thou and thy friend, till my compassion found thee;
Compassion! scarce will't own that name, so soon,
So quickly was it love; for thou wert godlike,
E'en then. Kneeling on earth, I loosed my hair,
And with it dried thy watery cheeks, then chafed
Thy temples, till reviving blood arose,
And, like the morn, vermilion'd o'er thy face.
Oh, Heaven! how did my heart rejoice and ache,
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,
And felt the balm of thy respiring lips!
Osm. Oh, call not to my mind what you have done;
It sets a debt of that account before me,
Which shows me poor and bankrupt even in hopes.
Zar. Oh! why do I relate what I have done?
What did I not? Was't not for you this war
Commenced! not knowing who you were, nor why
You hated Manuel, I urged my husband
To this invasion: where he late was lost,
Where all is lost, and I am made a slave!
Osm. You pierce my soul—I own it all—But while
The power is wanting to repay such benefits,
'Tis treble anguish to a generous heart.
Zar. Yet thus, thus fall'n, thus levell'd with the vilest,

If I have gain'd thy love, 'tis glorious ruin;
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more
A queen; for what are riches, empire, power,
But larger means to gratify the will?
The steps on which we tread, to rise and reach
Our wish; and that obtain'd, down with the scaffolding
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones: they've served their end,
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorn'd.

Osm. Why was I made the instrument to throw
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

Zar. We may be free; the conqueror is mine;
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,
And can unwind and strain him as I please.
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

Osm. In vain you offer, and in vain require
What neither can bestow. Set free yourself,
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

Zar. Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talk'st.

Osm. Alas! you know me not.

Zar. Not who thou art:
But what this last ingratitude declares,
This grovelling baseness—Thou say'st true, I know
Thee not; for what thou art yet wants a name;
But something so unworthy and so vile,
That to have loved thee makes me yet more lost
Than all the malice of my other fate.
Traitor, monster, cold and perfidious slave;
A slave not daring to be free; nor dares
To love above him; for 'tis dangerous.
The King!
There, there's the dreadful sound, the King's thy rival!

Sel. Madam, the King is here.

Zar. As I could wish; by Heaven I'll be revenged.

Enter the KING, PEREZ, *and* ATTENDANTS.

King. Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw
Her radiance from the day, to gild this scene
Of death and night? Ha! what disorder's this?
Somewhat I heard of King and rival mention'd.
What's he that dares be rival to the King,
Or lift his eyes to like where I adore?

Zar. There, he, your prisoner, and that was my slave.

King. How? better than my hopes! Does she accuse him? [*Aside.*

Zar. Am I become so low by my captivity,
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld
Waiting my nod, the creature of my power,
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

King. Better for him to tempt the rage of Heaven,
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand
Of him that thunders, than but to think that insolence.
Hence to the wheel with that Ixion,
To whips and prisons
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.
[*Exeunt* OSMYN, PEREZ, *and* GUARDS.

Zar. Compassion led me to bemoan his state,
Whose former faith had merited much more:
And, through my hopes in you, I undertook
He should be set at large! thence sprung his insolence,
And what was charity, he construed love.

King. Enough; his punishment be what you please.
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow
To one where young delights attend,
Where every hour shall roll in circling joys,

And love shall wing the tedious-wasting day.
Life, without love, is load; and time stands still:
What we refuse to him, to death we give;
And then, then only, when we love we live.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Prison.

OSMYN, *with a Paper.*

Osm. But now, and I was closed within the tomb
That holds my father's ashes; and but now,
Where he was pris'ner, I am too imprison'd.
Sure 'tis the hand of Heaven that leads me thus,
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.
In a dark corner of my cell I found
This paper; what it is, this light will show.

[Reading.] *If my Alphonso*—Ha!
If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heaven;
Give me more weight, crush my declining years
With bolts, with chains, imprisonment, and want;
But bless my son, visit not him for me.

It is his hand; this was his pray'r——yet more;

[Reading.] *Let ev'ry hair, which sorrow by the roots*
Tears from my hoary and devoted head,
Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:
Not for myself, but him, hear me, all-gracious——

'Tis wanting what should follow——Heaven should follow,
But 'tis torn off—Why should that word alone
Be torn from this petition? 'Twas to Heaven,
But Heaven was deaf, Heaven heard him not; but thus,
Thus as the name of heaven from this is torn,
So did it tear the ears of mercy from
His voice, shutting the gates of pray'r against him.
What noise! Who's there? My friend? How camest thou hither?

Enter HELI.

Heli. The captain, influenced by Almeria's power,
Gave order to the guards for my admittance.
Osm. How does Almeria? But I know she is
As I am. Tell me, may I hope to see her?
Heli. You may. Anon, at midnight, when the King.
Is gone to rest, and Garcia is retired,
(Who takes the privilege to visit late,
Presuming on a bridegroom's right) she'll come.
Osm. She'll come; 'tis what I wish, yet what I fear.
She'll come; but whither, and to whom? Oh, Heaven!
To a vile prison, and a captive wretch;
To one, whom, had she never known, she had
Been happy. Why, why was that heavenly creature
Abandon'd o'er to love what Heaven forsakes?
Why does she follow, with unwearied steps,
One who has tired misfortune with pursuing?

Heli. Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.
I've learn'd there are disorders ripe for mutiny
Among the troops, who thought to share the plunder,
Which Manuel to his own use and avarice
Converts. The news has reach'd Valentia's frontiers,
Where many of your subjects, long oppress'd
With tyranny, and grievous impositions,
Are risen in arms, and call for chiefs to head
And lead them to regain their rights and liberty.
Osm. By Heaven, thou'st roused me from my lethargy!
The spirit, which was deaf to my own wrongs,
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,
My people's voice has waken'd.
Heli. Zara, the cause of your restraint, may be
The means of liberty restored. That gain'd,
Occasion will not fail to point out ways
For your escape. Meantime, I've thought already
With speed and safety to convey myself,
Where, not far off, some malcontents hold council
Nightly, who hate this tyrant; some, who love
Anselmo's memory, and will, for certain,
When they shall know you live, assist your cause.
Osm. Away, my counsellor; as thou think'st fit,
So do. I will, with patience, wait my fortune.
Heli. When Zara comes, abate of your aversion.
Osm. I hate her not, nor can dissemble love:
But as I may I'll do.
My friend, the good thou dost deserve, attend thee.
[*Exit* HELI.
I've been to blame, and question'd with impiety
The care of Heaven. Not so my father bore
More anxious grief. This should have better taught me;
This his last legacy to me: which, here,
I'll treasure as more worth than diadems,
Or all extended rule of regal power.

What brightness breaks upon me thus through shades,
And promises a day to this dark dwelling?
Is it my love?

Enter ZARA, *veiled.*

Zar. Oh, that thy heart had taught
[*Lifting her Veil.*
Thy tongue that saying!

Osm. Zara! I am betray'd
By my surprise.

Zar. What! does my face displease thee?
That, having seen it, thou dost turn thine eyes
Away, as from deformity and horror?
If so, this sable curtain shall again
Be drawn, and I will stand before thee, seeing,
And unseen. Is it my love? Ask again
That question; speak again in that soft voice!
Oh, no! thou canst not, for thou seest me now,
As she, whose savage breast hath been the cause
Of these thy wrongs; as she, whose barb'rous rage
Has loaded thee with chains and galling irons.

Osm. You wrong me, beauteous Zara, to believe
I bear my fortunes with so low a mind;
But destiny and inauspicious stars
Have cast me down to this low being. Or,
Granting you had, from you I have deserved it.

Zar. Canst thou forgive me, then? wilt thou believe
So kindly of my fault, to call it madness?
Oh, give that madness yet a milder name,
And call it passion! then, be still more kind,
And call that passion love.

Osm. Give it a name,
Or being, as you please, such I will think it.

Zar. Oh, thou dost wound me more with this thy goodness,

Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches;
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.
Osm. Yet I could wish——
Zar. Haste me to know it; what?
Osm. That at this time I had not been this——
Zar. What?
Osm. This slave.
Zar. Oh, Heaven! my fears interpret
This thy silence; somewhat of high concern,
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruin'd.
Have I done this? Tell me, am I so cursed?
Osm. Time may have still one fated hour to come,
Which, wing'd with liberty, might overtake
Occasion past.
Zar. Swift as occasion, I
Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn,
Wake thee to freedom. [*Going.*
Osm. I have not merited this grace; [*Stops her.*
Nor, should my secret purpose take effect,
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.
Zar. Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more
To give, than I've already lost. But now,
So does the form of our engagements rest,
Thou hast the wrong till I redeem thee hence;
That done, I leave thy justice to return
My love. Adieu. [*Exit.*
Osm. This woman has a soul
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,
And challenges, in spite of me, my best
Esteem;
But she has passions which outstrip the wind,
And tear her virtues up, as tempests root
The sea. I fear, when she shall know the truth,
Some swift and dire event of her blind rage
Will make all fatal. But behold, she comes

For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,
The cause and comfort of my bleeding heart.

Enter ALMERIA.

My life, my health, my liberty, my all!
How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?
Alm. Thus, thus; we parted, thus to meet again.
Thou told'st me thou wou'd'st think how we might meet
To part no more——Now we will part no more;
For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.
Osm. Oh! O——
Alm. Give me that sigh.
Why dost thou heave, and stifle in thy griefs?
Give thy soul way, and tell me thy dark thought.
Osm. For this world's rule I would not wound thy breast
With such a dagger as then struck my heart.
Alm. Why? why? To know it, cannot wound me more
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me,—
Thou givest me pain with too much tenderness.
Osm. Thou art my wife——nay, thou art yet my bride——
Think of to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn
From these weak, struggling, unextended arms:
Think how I am, when thou shalt wed with Garcia!
Hell! Hell! have I not cause to rage and rave?
What are all racks, and wheels, and whips to this?
Oh! my Almeria!
What do the damn'd endure, but to despair,
But knowing Heaven, to know it lost for ever?
Alm. Oh, I am struck; thy words are bolts of ice,
Which, shot into my breast, now melt and chill me.
Zara. [*Without.*] Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom.

Dare you dispute the King's command? Behold
The royal signet.
Per. I obey; yet beg
Your majesty one moment to defer
Your ent'ring, till the princess is return'd
From visiting the noble prisoner.

Enter ZARA, PEREZ, *and* SELIM.

Zar. Ha!
What say'st thou?
Osm. We are all lost! undone! discover'd!
Retire, my life, with speed——Alas, let me
Conduct you forth, as not perceiving her,
But till she's gone; then bless me thus again.
Zar. Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!
Confusion in his face, and grief in hers!
'Tis plain I've been abused.
Perdition catch them both!
Osm. This charity to one unknown, and thus
[*Aloud to* ALMERIA, *as she goes out.*
Distress'd, Heaven will repay; all thanks are poor.
[*Exit* ALMERIA.
Zar. Vile, vile dissembler! Yet I will be calm,
Choke in my rage, and know the utmost depth
Of this deceiver——You seem much surprised.
Osm. At your return so soon and unexpected.
Zar. And so unwish'd, unwanted too, it seems.
Confusion! Yet I will contain myself.
You're grown a favourite since last we parted;
Perhaps I'm saucy and intruding——
Osm. ——Madam!
Zar. I did not know the princess' favourite.
Your pardon, sir——mistake me not; you think
I'm angry; you're deceived. I came to set
You free; but shall return much better pleased,
To find you have an interest superior.
Osm. You do not come to mock my miseries?

Zar. I do.
Osm. I could at this time spare your mirth.
Zar. I know thou could'st; but I'm not often pleased,
And will indulge it now. What miseries?
Who would not be thus happily confined,
To be the care of weeping majesty;
To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forsake their down, to wake with wat'ry eyes,
And watch, like tapers, o'er your hours of rest!
Oh, curse! I cannot hold——
Osm. Come, 'tis too much.
Zar. Villain!
Osm. How, madam!
Zar. Thou shalt die.
Osm. I thank you.
Zar. 'Tis false, for now I know for whom thou'dst live.
Osm. Then you may know for whom I'd die.
Zar. Distraction!
Yet I'll be calm——Dark and unknown betrayer!
But now the dawn begins, and the slow hand
Of Fate is stretch'd to draw the veil, and leave
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.
Osm. You may be still deceived, 'tis in my pow'r—
Chain'd as I am, to fly from all my wrongs,
And free myself, at once, from misery,
And you of me.
Zar. Ha! say'st thou—but I'll prevent it——
Who waits there?

Enter PEREZ.

As you will answer it, look this slave [*To* PEREZ
Attempt no means to make himself away.
I've been deceived. The public safety now
Requires he should be more confined, and none,

No, not the princess, suffer'd or to see
Or speak with him. I'll quit you to the King.
[*Exit* PEREZ.
Vile and ingrate! too late thou shalt repent
The base injustice thou hast done my love.
Yes, thou shalt know, spite of thy past distress,
And all those ills which thou so long hast mourn'd,
Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Room of State.

ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zar. Thou hast already rack'd me with thy stay;
Therefore require me not to ask thee twice:
Reply at once to all. What is concluded?
Sel. Your accusation highly has incensed
The King, and were alone enough to urge
The fate of Osmyn; but to that, fresh news
Is since arrived, of more revolted troops.
'Tis certain Heli, too, is fled, and with him
(Which breeds amazement and distraction) some
Who bore high offices of weight and trust,
Both in the state and army. This confirms
The King in full belief of all you told him
Concerning Osmyn, and his correspondence
With them, who first began the mutiny.

Wherefore a warrant for his death is sign'd;
And order given for public execution.
Zar. Ha! haste thee! fly, prevent his fate and mine,
Find out the King; tell him I have of weight
More than his crown, t' impart, ere Osmyn die.
Sel. It needs not, for the King will straight be here;
And, as to your revenge, not his own int'rest,
Pretend to sacrifice the life of Osmyn.
Zar. What shall I say? invent, contrive, advise:
Spite of my rage and pride,
I am a woman, and a lover still.
Oh! 'tis more grief but to suppose his death
Than still to meet the rigour of his scorn,
Devise some means to shun it,
Quick; or, by Heaven, this dagger drinks thy l
Sel. My life is yours, nor wish I to preserve it,
[*Kneels.*
But to serve you. I have already thought.
Zar. Forgive my rage; I know thy love and truth.
But say, what's to be done, or when, or how,
Shall I prevent or stop the approaching danger?
Sel. You must still seem more resolute and fix'd
[*Rises.*
On Osmyn's death; too quick a change of mercy
Might breed suspicion of the cause. Advise
That execution may be done in private.
Zar. On what pretence?
Sel. Your own request's enough.
However, for a colour, tell him you
Have cause to fear his guards may be corrupted,
And some of them brought off to Osmyn's interest,
Who, at the place of execution, will
Attempt to force his way for an escape;
The state of things will countenance all suspicions.
Then offer to the King to have him strangled
In secret by your mutes; and get an order,

That none but mutes may have admittance to him.
I can no more, the King is here. Obtain
This grant, and I'll acquaint you with the rest.

Enter KING, GONSALEZ, *and* PEREZ.

King. Bear to the dungeon those rebellious slaves;
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,
Let them be led away to present death.
Perez, see it perform'd.
Gon. Might I presume,
Their execution better were deferr'd
Till Osmyn die. Mean time we may learn more
Of this conspiracy.
King. Then be it so.
Stay, soldier; they shall suffer with the Moor.
Are none return'd of those who follow'd Heli?
Gon. None, sir. Some papers have been since discover'd
In Rodrigo's house, who fled with him,
Which seem'd to intimate, as if Alphonso
Were still alive, and arming in Valentia:
Which wears indeed the colour of a truth,
They who are fled have that way bent their course.
Of the same nature divers notes have been
Dispersed to amuse the people; whereupon
Some, ready of belief, have raised this rumour:
That, being saved upon the coast of Afric,
He there disclosed himself to Albucazim,
And, by a secret compact made with him,
Open'd and urged the way to this invasion;
While he himself, returning to Valentia
In private, undertook to raise this tumult.
Zar. Ha! hear'st thou that? Is Osmyn then Alphonso?
Oh, certain death for him, as sure despair
For me, if it be known——If not, what hope

Have I? Yet 'twere the lowest baseness now
To yield him up—No, I will conceal him,
And try the force of yet more obligations.
Gon. 'Tis not impossible. Yet it may be,
That some impostor has usurp'd his name.
Your beauteous captive, Zara, can inform,
If such a one, so 'scaping, was received
At any time in Albucazim's court.
King. Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:
[*To* ZARA.
An unforeseen, unwelcome hour of business
Has thrust between us and our while of love;
But wearing now apace, with ebbing sand,
Will quickly waste, and give again the day.
Zar. You're too secure: the danger is more imminent
Than your high courage suffers you to see;
While Osmyn lives, you are not safe.
King. His doom
Is pass'd; if you revoke it not, he dies.
Zar. 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your entrance,
I find I can unfold what yet concerns
You more. One, who did call himself Alphonso,
Was cast upon my coast, as 'tis reported,
And oft had private conference with the king;
To what effect I knew not then: but he,
Alphonso, secretly departed, just
About the time our arms embark'd for Spain.
What I know more is, that a triple league
Of strictest friendship was profest between
Alphonso, Heli, and the traitor Osmyn.
King. Public report is ratify'd in this.
Zar. And Osmyn's death required of strong necessity.
King. Give order strait, that all the pris'ners die.
Zar. Forbear a moment, somewhat more I have
Worthy your private ear, and this your minister.

King. Let all, except Gonsalez, leave the room.
[*Exeunt* PEREZ, *&c.*

Zar. I am your captive, and you've used me nobly;
And, in return of that, though otherwise
Your enemy,
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards
Are tainted; some among them have resolved
To rescue Osmyn at the place of death.

King. Is treason then so near us as our guards?

Zar. Most certain; though my knowledge is not yet
So ripe, to point at the particular men.

King. What's to be done?

Zar. That too I will advise.
I have remaining in my train some mutes,
A present once from the sultana queen,
In the grand signior's court. These from their infancy
Are practised in the trade of death; and shall
(As there the custom is) in private strangle
Osmyn.

Gon. My lord, the queen advises well.

King. What off'ring, or what recompense remains
In me, that can be worthy so great services?
To cast beneath your feet the crown you've saved,
Though on the head that wears it, were too little.

Zar. Of that hereafter: but, mean time, 'tis fit
You give strict charge that none may be admitted
To see the pris'ner, but such mutes as I
Shall send.

King. Who waits there?

Enter PEREZ.

King. On your life take heed,
That only Zara's mutes, or such, who bring
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.

Zar. They, and no other, not the princess' self.

Per. Your majesty shall be obey'd.

King. Retire. [*Exit* PEREZ.

Gon. That interdiction so particular,
Pronounced with vehemence against the princess,
Should have more meaning than the words import.
[*Aside.*
Your majesty might sure have spared
The last restraint: you hardly can suspect
The princess is confed'rate with the Moor.
Zar. I've heard her charity did once extend
So far, to visit him at his request.
Gon. Ha!
King. How! She visit Osmyn! What, my daughter?
Sel. Madam, take heed; or you have ruin'd all.
Zar. And after did solicit you on his
Behalf.——
King. Never. You have been misinform'd.
Zar. Indeed! Then 'twas a whisper spread by some,
Who wish'd it so; a common art in courts.
I will retire, and instantly prepare
Instruction for my ministers of death.
[*Exeunt* ZARA *and* SELIM.—*The* KING *conducts her out.*
Gon. There's somewhat yet of mystery in this;
Her words and actions are obscure and double,
Sometimes concur, and sometimes disagree:
I like it not.

Enter KING.

King. What dost thou think, Gonsalez?
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?
Gon Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor
Disquiets her too much; which makes it seem
As if she'd rather, that she did not hate him.
I wish her mutes are meant to be employ'd
As she pretends—I doubt it now—Your guards
Corrupted! How? by whom? Who told her so?

I' th' evening Osmyn was to die; at midnight
She begg'd the royal signet to release him;
I' th' morning he must die again; ere noon
Her mutes alone must strangle him, or he'll
Escape. This, put together, suits not well.
King. Yet that there's truth in what she has discover'd,
Is manifest from every circumstance.
This tumult, and the lords who fled with Heli,
Are confirmation;——that Alphonso lives
Agrees expressly too with her report.
Gon. I grant it, sir; and doubt not, but in rage
Of jealousy, she has discover'd what
She now repents. It may be I'm deceived.
But why that needless caution of the princess?
What if she had seen Osmyn? Though 'twere strange;
But if she had, what was't to her, unless
She fear'd her stronger charms might cause the Moor's
Affection to revolt?
King. I thank thee, friend.
There's reason in thy doubt, and I am warn'd.—
But think'st thou, that my daughter saw this Moor?
Gon. If Osmyn be, as Zara has related,
Alphonso's friend, 'tis not impossible
But she might wish, on his account, to see him.
King. Say'st thou? By Heaven, thou hast roused a thought,
That, like a sudden earthquake, shakes my frame.
Confusion! then my daughter is an accomplice,
And plots in private with this hellish Moor.
Gon. That were too hard a thought——but see, she comes—
If what I fear be true, she'll be concern'd
For Osmyn's death, as he's Alphonso's friend:
Urge that, to try if she'll solicit for him.

Enter ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.

King. Your coming has prevented me, Almeria;
I had determined to have sent for you.
Let your attendant be dismiss'd; I have
[LEONORA *retires.*
To talk with you. Come near; why dost thou shake?
What mean those swoll'n and red-fleck'd eyes, that look
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night
In waking anguish? Why this on the day
Which was design'd to celebrate thy nuptials;
But that the beams of light are to be stain'd
With reeking gore, from traitors on the rack?
Wherefore I have deferr'd the marriage rites;
Nor shall the guilty horrors of this day
Profane that jubilee.

Alm. All days to me
Henceforth are equal: this, the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows,
Will undistinguish'd roll, and but prolong
One hated line of more extended woe.

King. Whence is thy grief? Give me to know the cause;
And look thou answer me with truth; for know,
I am not unacquainted with thy falsehood.
Why art thou mute? Base and degenerate maid!

Gon. Dear madam, speak, or you'll incense the king.

Alm. What is't to speak? Or wherefore should I speak?
What mean these tears but grief unutterable?

King. They are the dumb confessions of thy mind:
They mean thy guilt, and say thou wert confed'rate
With damn'd conspirators to take my life.

Swear thou hast never seen that foreign slave,
Now doom'd to die, that most accursed Osmyn.
Alm. Never, but as with innocence I might,
And free of all bad purposes. So Heaven's
My witness.
King. With innocence!—Oh, patience! hear—
she owns it!
Confesses it! by Heaven, I'll have him rack'd!
All pains and tortures,
That wit of man or dire revenge can think,
Shall he, accumulated, underbear.
Know, traitress,
I'm not to learn, that cursed Alphonso lives;
Nor am I ignorant what Osmyn is——
Alm. Then all is ended, and we both must die.
King. What, darest thou to my face avow thy
guilt?
Hence, ere I curse, and spurn thee from my presence.
Alm. And yet a father! Think, I am your child!
Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling;—
Now curse me, if you can, now spurn me off.
Did ever father curse his kneeling child?
Never: for always blessings crown that posture.
O, hear me then, thus crawling on the earth——
King. Be thou advised, and let me go, while yet
The light impression thou hast made remains.
Alm. No, never will I rise, nor lose this hold,
Till you are moved, and grant that he may live.
King. Ha! who may live?—Take heed! no more
of that;
For, on my soul, he dies; though thou and I,
And all should follow, to partake his doom.
Away, off, let me go——Call her attendant.
[LEONORA *returns.*
Alm. Drag me,—harrow the earth with my bare
bosom;
I will not go, till you have spared my husband.

King. What say'st thou? Husband!—Husband!
Alm. He, he is my husband.
King. Who?
Alm. Oh—— [*Faints.*
King. What husband? Whom dost thou mean?
Alm. Osmyn, he is my husband.
Gon. She raves!
King. Osmyn!
Alm. Not Osmyn, but Alphonso, is my dear
And wedded husband——Heaven, and air, and seas,
Ye winds and waves, I call ye all to witness.
King. Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.
Should I hear more, I too should catch thy madness.—
Watch her returning sense, and bring me word;
And look that she attempt not on her life.
[*Exit* KING.
Alm. Oh, stay, yet stay! hear me, I am not mad,
I would to Heaven I were——
Gon. Have comfort——
Alm. Cursed be that tongue, that bids me be of comfort;
Cursed my own tongue, that could not move his pity;
Cursed these weak hands, that could not hold him here;
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.
Gon. Your too excessive grief works on your fancy,
And deludes your sense.—Alphonso, if living,
Is far from hence, beyond your father's power.
Alm. Hence, thou detested, ill-timed flatterer!
Source of my woes: thou and thy race be cursed;
But doubly thou, who could'st alone have policy
And fraud to find the fatal secret out,
And know that Osmyn was Alphonso.
Gon. Ha!

Alm. Why dost thou start? What dost thou see or hear?
Was it the doleful bell, tolling for death;
Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?
Hark! a voice cries, Murder! ah!
My father's voice! hollow it sounds, and calls
Me from the tomb—I'll follow it; for there
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.
[*Exeunt* ALMERIA *and* LEONORA.
Gon. Her husband too!—Ha!—Where is Garcia then?
And where's the crown that should descend on him,
To grace the line of my posterity?
Hold—let me think—if I should tell the king——
Things come to this extremity: his daughter
Wedded already—what if he should yield?
Knowing no remedy for what is past,
And urged by nature pleading for his child,
With which he seems to be already shaken.
But how prevent the captive queen, who means
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain. O well
Invented tale! He was Alphonso's friend!
This subtle woman will amuse the king—
If I delay——
One to my wish.—Alonzo, thou art welcome.

Enter ALONZO.

Alon. The king expects your lordship.
Gon. 'Tis no matter:
I'm not i' the way at present, good Alonzo.
Alon. If it please your lordship, I'll return, and say,
I have not seen you.
Gon. Do, my best Alonzo.
Yet stay,——
I think, thou would'st not stop to do me service?

Alon. I am your slave.

Gon. Say, thou art my friend.
I've seen thy sword do noble execution.

Alon. All, that I can, your lordship shall command.

Gon. Thanks, and I take thee at thy word. Thou'st seen,
Amongst the followers of the captive queen,
Dumb men, who make their meaning known by signs?

Alon. I have, my lord.

Gon. Could'st thou procure, with speed
And privacy, the wearing garb of one
Of those, though purchased by his death, I'd give
Thee such reward, as should exceed thy wish.

Alon. Conclude it done.—Where shall I wait your lordship?

Gon. At my apartment.—Use thy utmost diligence;
And say, I've not been seen—Haste, good Alonzo—
[*Exit* ALONZO.
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonso slain,
The greatest obstacle is then removed.
Almeria, widow'd, yet again may wed;
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Room of State.

Enter KING, PEREZ, *and* ALONZO.

King. Not to be found!—In an ill hour he's absent—
None, say you? none! What, not the fav'rite eunuch?
Nor she herself, nor any of her mutes,
Have yet required admittance?
Per. None, my lord.
King. Is Osmyn so disposed as I commanded?
Per. Fast bound in double chains, and at full length,
He lies supine on earth:—with as much ease
She might remove the centre of this earth,
As loose the rivets of his bonds.
King. 'Tis well.
[*A* MUTE *appears, and seeing the* KING, *retires.*
Ha! stop, and seize that Mute!—Alonzo, follow him.
[ALONZO *follows him.*
Ent'ring he met my eyes, and, starting back,
Frighted, and fumbling one hand in his bosom,
As to conceal the importance of his errand.

ALONZO *returns, with a Paper.*

Alon. A bloody proof of obstinate fidelity!
King. What dost thou mean?

Alon. Soon as I seized the slave,
He snatch'd from out his bosom this—and strove
With rash and greedy haste, at once, to cram
The morsel down his throat. I caught his arm,
And hardly wrench'd his hand to wring it from him:
Which done, he drew a poniard from his side,
And on the instant plunged it in his breast.

King. Remove the body thence, ere Zara see it.

Alon. I shall, my lord—I'll borrow his attire;
'Twill quit me of my promise to Gonsalez. [*Aside.*

[*Exit* ALONZO.

King. How's this? My mortal foe beneath my roof!

[*Having read the Letter.*

Oh, give me patience, all ye powers! No, rather
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,
And trebled fury—Ha! who's there?

Per. My lord!

King. Hence, slave! how darest thou bide to watch and pry
Into how poor a thing a king descends,
How like thyself, when passion treads him down?
Ha! stir not, on thy life! for thou wert fix'd
And planted there, to see me gorge this bait,
And lash against the hook—By Heaven, you're all
Rank traitors! thou art with the rest combined:
Thou knew'st that Osmyn was Alphonso; knew'st
My daughter privately with him conferr'd;
And wert the spy and pander to their meeting.

Per. My sovereign lord——

King. Thou art accomplice too with Zara; here
Where she sets down—*Still will I set thee free*—

[*Reading.*

That somewhere is repeated—*I have power*
O'er them that are thy guards—Mark that, thou traitor!

Per. It was your majesty's command I should
Obey her order——

King. By Heaven, I'll meet, and counteract this treachery.
Hark thee, villain, traitor—answer me, slave!
Per. My service has not merited those titles.
King. Darest thou reply?
Hear my command: and look
That thou obey, or horror on thy head:
Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart.
Why dost thou start? Resolve, or——
Per. Sir, I will. [*Going.*
King. Stay thee—I've farther thought—I'll add to this,
And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:
When thou hast ended him, bring me his robe;
And let the cell, where she'll expect to see him,
Be darken'd, so as to amuse the sight.
I'll be conducted thither——
There, with his turban, and his robe array'd,
And laid along, as he now lies supine,
I shall convict her, to her face, of falsehood.
When, for Alphonso's, she shall take my hand,
And breathe her sighs upon my lips for his;
Sudden I'll start and dash her with her guilt.
But see, she comes. I'll shun the encounter—thou
Follow me, and give heed to my direction. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ZARA *and* SELIM.

Zar. The mute not yet return'd!—Ha! 'twas the King—
The King that parted hence!—Dost think
He saw me?
Sel. Yes—but then, as if he thought
His eyes had err'd, he hastily recall'd
The imperfect look, and sternly turn'd away.
Zar. Shun me, when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.
Sel. Avert it, Heaven! that you should ever suffer
For my defect; or that the means, which I

Devised to serve, should ruin your design.
I plead not for a pardon, and to live,
But to be punish'd and forgiven. Here, strike;
I bare my breast to meet your just revenge. [*Kneels.*
Zar. I have not leisure now to take so poor
A forfeit as thy life; somewhat of high [*Rises.*
And more important fate requires my thought.
Regard me well; and dare not to reply
To what I give in charge; for I'm resolved.
Give order that the two remaining mutes
Attend me instantly, with each a bowl
Of such ingredients mix'd, as will with speed
Benumb the living faculties, and give
Most easy and inevitable death.— [*Exit* SELIM.
Yes, Osmyn, yes; be Osmyn or Alphonso,
I'll give thee freedom, if thou darest be free:
Such liberty as I embrace myself
Thou shalt partake. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Prison.

Enter GONSALEZ, *disguised like a* MUTE, *with a Dagger.*

Gon. Nor centinel, nor guard! the doors unbarr'd!
And all as still as at the noon of night!
Sure death already has been busy here.
There lies my way; the door too is unlock'd.
[*Looking in.*
Ha! sure he sleeps—all's dark within, save what
A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,
By fits reveals—his face seems turn'd to favour
The attempt.
I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart,
Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it.
[*Goes in.*

Enter GARCIA *and* ALONZO.

Gar. Where, where, Alonzo, where's my father?—
Where
The King?—Confusion! all is on the rout!
All lost, all ruin'd, by surprise and treachery.
Where, where is he? Why dost thou mislead me?
Alon. My lord, he enter'd but a moment since,
And could not pass me unperceived—What hoa!
My lord, my lord! What hoa! my Lord Gonsalez!

Enter GONSALEZ, *bloody.*

Gon. Who's there? perdition choke your clamours
—whence this rudeness?
Garcia?
Gar. Perdition, slavery, and death,
Are entering now our doors. Where is the King?
What means this blood: and why this face of horror?
Gon. No matter—give me first to know the cause
Of these your rash and ill-timed exclamations.
Gar. The eastern gate is to the foe betray'd.
Unless
The King in person animate our men,
Granada's lost; and to confirm this fear,
The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,
Are through a postern fled, and join'd the foe.
Gon. Would all were false as that; for, whom you call
The Moor, is dead. That Osmyn was Alphonso!
In whose heart's blood this poniard yet is warm.
Gar. Impossible: for Osmyn was, while flying,
Pronounced aloud by Perez for Alphonso.
Gon. Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes
How much report has wrong'd your easy faith.
[GARCIA *goes in.*
Alon. My lord, for certain truth, Perez is fled;
And has declared the cause of his revolt

Was to revenge a blow the King had given him.
Gar. [*Returning.*] Ruin and horror! Oh, heart-wounding sight!
Gon. What says my son?
Gar. O dire mistake! O fatal blow!
The King——
Gon. Alon. The King!
Gar. Dead, welt'ring, drown'd in blood.
See, see, attired like Osmyn, where he lies.
[*They look in.*
Nothing remains to do, or to require,
But that we all should turn our swords against
Ourselves, and expiate, with our own, his blood.
Gon. Oh, wretch! Oh, cursed rash deluded fool!
On me, on me turn your avenging swords.
I, who have spilt my royal master's blood,
Should make atonement by a death as horrid,
And fall beneath the hand of my own son.
From the blind dotage
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.
For thee I've been ambitious, base, and bloody:
For thee I've plunged into this sea of sin;
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While t'other bore the crown (to wreathe thy bro
Whose weight has sunk me, ere I reach'd the sho
Gar. Fatal ambition!—Hark! the foe is enter'd.
[*Flourish.*
Alon. My lord, I've thought how to conceal the body.
Require me not to tell the means till done,
Lest you forbid what you may then approve.
[*Goes in.—Flourish.*
Again these sounds! Whate'er he means to do,
'Twere fit the soldiers were amused with hopes;
And, in the mean time, fed with expectation
To see the King in person at their head.
Gar. Were it a truth, I fear 'tis now too late.

But I'll omit no care, nor haste; and try,
Or to repel their force, or bravely die.
[*Exit* GARCIA.

Enter ALONZO.

Gon. What hast thou done, Alonzo?
Alon. Such a deed,
As but an hour ago I'd not have done,
Though for the crown of universal empire!
But who can wound the dead?—I've from the body
Severed the head, and in an obscure corner
Disposed it, muffled in the mute's attire,
Leaving to view of them who enter next,
Alone the undistinguishable trunk;
Which may be still mistaken by the guards
For Osmyn, if, in seeking for the King,
They chance to find it.
Gon. 'Twas an act of horror;
And of a piece with this day's dire misdeeds.
But 'tis no time to ponder or repent.
Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence with speed,
To aid my son; I'll follow with the last
Reserve, to reinforce his arms: at least,
I shall make good and shelter his retreat.
[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter ZARA, *followed by* SELIM, *and Two* MUTES, *bearing the Bowls.*

Zar. Silence and solitude are every where.
Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors
That hither lead, no human face nor voice
Is seen or heard.
Let them set down the bowls, and warn Alphonso
That I am here—so. You return, and find
[MUTES *going in.*
The King; tell him, what he required, I've done,
And wait his coming to approve the deed.
[*Exit* SELIM.

The MUTES *return, and look affrighted.*

Zar. What have you seen? Ha! wherefore stare you thus,
With hagard eyes? Why are your arms across?
Your heavy and desponding heads hung down?
Why is't you more than speak in these sad signs?
Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.
[*She goes to the Opening, and perceives the Body.*
Ha! prostrate! bloody! headless! Oh——I'm lost!
Oh, Osmyn! Oh, Alphonso!
Rain, rain, ye fires, pour down
Your blazing torrents on the tyrant's head,
On this accursed, this base, this treach'rous King!
Yet wherefore rave I thus? for 'twas decreed
We both should die.
But, oh, he died unknowing in my heart.
He knew I loved, but knew not to what height:
Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,
A martyr and a victim to my vows.
Insensible of this last proof he's gone:
Then wherefore do I pause? Give me the bowl.
[*A* MUTE *kneels, and gives one of the Bowls.*
Hover a moment yet, thou gentle spirit,
Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight.
This to our mutual bliss, when join'd above. [*Drinks.*
Oh, friendly draught, already in my heart.
Cold, cold; my veins are icicles and frost.
I'll creep into his bosom, lay me there;
Cover us close—or I shall chill his breast,
And fright him from my arms—See, see, he slides
Still farther from me! look, he hides his face!
I cannot feel it—quite beyond my reach,—
Oh, now he's gone, and all is dark—— [*Dies.*
[*The* MUTES *kneel, and mourn over her.*

Alm. [*Without.*] Oh, let me seek him in this horrid cell;
For in the tomb, or prison, I alone
Must hope to find him.

Enter LEONORA *and* ALMERIA.

Leon. Heavens! what dismal scene
Of death is this?
Alm. Show me, for I am come in search of death,
But want a guide; for tears have dimm'd my sight.
Leon. Forbear, forbear—lift up your eyes no more;
But haste away; fly from this fatal place,
Where miseries are multiplied; return,
Return, and look not on; for there's a dagger
Ready to stab the sight, and make your eyes
Rain blood——
Alm. Oh, I foreknow, foresee that object.
Is it at last then so? Is he then dead?——
I do not weep! the springs of tears are dried;
And of a sudden I am calm, as if
All things were well; and yet my husband's murder'd!——
Those men have left to weep! they look on me!
I hope they murder all on whom they look.
Behold me well: your bloody hands have err'd,
And wrongfully have slain those innocents:
I am the sacrifice design'd to bleed,
And come prepared to yield my throat—They shake
Their heads in sign of grief and innocence!
[*They point at the bowl on the ground.*
And point! What mean they! Ha! a cup; Oh, well.
I understand what med'cine has been here.——
Oh, for another draught of death——
[*They point at the other cup.*
Ha! point again! 'tis there, and full, I hope.
Thanks to the lib'ral hand that fill'd thee thus;
I'll drink my glad acknowledgment——

Enter ALPHONSO, HELI, PEREZ, *with* GARCIA *Prisoner.* GUARDS *and* ATTENDANTS.

Alph. Away, stand off! where is she? let me flv:
Warm her to life, and wake her into gladness.

Alm. Where am I? Heaven! what does this dream intend?

Alph. O, may'st thou never dream of less delight,
Nor ever wake to less substantial joys!

Alm. Given me again from death! Oh, all ye powers,
Confirm this miracle!
This is my lord, my life, my only husband;
I have him now, and we no more will part.
My father, too, shall have compassion——

Alph. Oh, my heart's comfort; 'tis not given to this
Frail life to be entirely bless'd. E'en now,
In this extremest joy my soul can taste,
Yet I am dash'd to think that thou must weep;
Thy father fell where he design'd my death.
Gonsalez and Alonzo, both of wounds
Expiring, have, with their last breath, confess'd
The just decrees of Heaven, which on themselves
Has turn'd their own most bloody purposes.
Nay, I must grant, 'tis fit you should be thus——

[*She weeps.*

Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup! Alas,
Thy error then is plain! but I were flint
Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.
Oh, Garcia!——
Whose virtue has renounced thy father's crimes,
Seest thou how just the hand of Heaven has been?
Let us, who through our innocence survive,
Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

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MAHOMET

THE IMPOSTOR;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY THE REV. MR MILLER.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS,

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

THIS tragedy is a translation from the French, by the Rev. James Miller, who possessed the living of Upcerne, in Dorsetshire. He was a very extraordinary man—a political writer, who refused a large bribe, to abandon his opinions, and favour ministers of state.

ed with this drama. On its first representation, on the Dublin stage, a few sentences in the part of Alcanor, had such accidental allusion to some great men, or man, then in power in that nation, that the audience, enraptured upon the utterance, and willing to show their own implication, encored those lines with such unanimous vehemence, that the performer thought it his duty to repeat them, in compliance with their desire.

The late Mr Sheridan, father of the author of "The School for Scandal," was, at that time, manager of the theatre of Dublin, in which adventure, all his property, all his hopes, were embarked; yet, he boldly censured the actor, who had yielded to the command of the audience, and forbade a repetition of

any speech in the part of Alcanor, however loudly it might be called for, on the following night.

Mr Sheridan knew the predicament in which he was placed; he knew the fury of an exasperated audience in Ireland—he knew their power over all his possessions; yet, firm in his politics, he beheld, on the next evening, his theatre totally demolished, and his own life in danger, without revoking the peremptory order he had issued.

*But upon higher ground is this tragedy worthy of note: it is, in the original, the production of Voltaire—has deep interest—and some of the happiest thoughts of that celebrated writer are here delivered by the renowned, or affecting personages introduced; whilst tumultuous passions, of various tendency, give energy to every sentence.

The action of this drama commences just a few years after the foundation of the Mahometan empire; and, as there are many allusions in the course of the work to the preceding part of the Impostor's life, a short detail from history, of previous events, may enliven the reader's memory, and increase his attention to the scenes which follow.

Mahomet, the founder of a religion, which soon became, and still continues to be, the prevailing religion of the East, was born in 570, at Mecca, a city of Arabia.* His parents were poor, and, having both died in his early age, the guardianship of their orphan devolved on an uncle, who employed him to go with his caravans, from Mecca to Damascus.

In this employment of camel-driver, Mahomet con-

tinued till he was twenty-eight years of age, when he married a rich widow. Whether riches first inspired him with ambition, or ambition had induced him to marry for wealth, has not been determined; but, no sooner did he find himself elevated above his original rank in society, than he formed the mighty plan of subjugating the whole Eastern world to his dominion.

Mahomet, perhaps, falsely conceived, that imposition was the basis, on which all governments were built; and that, instead of being singular in his conduct, he merely followed the examples of other lawgivers, when he became sanctified in appearance, and when he boldly spoke of prodigies, by which he was invested with sovereign power from Heaven, both as a king and prophet.

Whatever were his notions of past events, he formed an accurate judgment of the future—he foresaw that an impostor might be obeyed—adored;—and that no extravagance of mystery or miracle, was too wonderful, or too ridiculous, for a people's belief.

Though Mahomet was too illiterate to write his own sacred laws in his divine book, the Koran, he possessed the knowledge to tell a surprising tale of its being entrusted to his hands by an angel from heaven;—which incredible occurrence had more power in gaining him proselytes, than all the moral precepts gathered from the Jewish and Christian scriptures, with which the learned men whose services he purchased, had adorned this work.

No sooner was the supposed prophet followed, and his creed accepted by the poor and ignorant, than, like

most innovators, he was accused of profanation, by the rich and the wise.—To escape the punishment of the enraged senate at Mecca, he took refuge in Medina; there, first established his temporal, as well as his spiritual power, and taught, that his doctrines were to be enforced by the sword.

Mecca, and all the Jewish Arabs, were the first who experienced the cruel progress of the Impostor's faith. In vanquishing all Arabia, twice he besieged the city of his birth-place, some years elapsing between the attacks.—On his second assault upon Mecca it is, that this tragedy opens, with one of its first citizens and senators—Alcanor.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHOMET	*Mr Palmer.*
MIRVAN	*Mr Barrymore.*
ALI	*Mr Caulfield.*
HERCIDES	
AMMON	
ZAPHNA	*Mr Kemble.*
ALCANOR	*Mr Bensley.*
PHARON	*Mr Packer.*
PALMIRA	*Mrs Siddons.*

SCENE—Mecca.

MAHOMET.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Temple of Mecca.

Enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

Alc. Pharon, no more—shall I
Fall prostrate to an arrogant impostor,
Homage, in Mecca, one I banish'd thence,
And incense the delusions of a rebel?
No! blast Alcanor, righteous Heaven, if e'er
This hand, yet free and uncontaminate,
Shall league with fraud, or adulate a tyrant!

Phar. August and sacred chief of Ishmael's senate,
This zeal of thine, paternal as it is,
Is fatal now—our impotent resistance
Controls not Mahomet's unbounded progress,
But, without weak'ning, irritates the tyrant.
When once a citizen, you well condemn'd him
As an obscure seditious innovator;
But now he is a conq'ror, prince, and pontiff,
Whilst nations, numberless, embrace his laws,
And pay him adoration—even in Mecca
He boasts his proselytes,

Alc. Such proselytes
Are worthy of him—low, untutor'd reptiles,
Most credulous still
Of what is most incredible.
Phar. Be such
Disdain'd, my lord! but, mayn't the pest spread upwards,
And seize the head?—Say, is the senate sound?
I fear some members of that rev'rend class
Are mark'd with the contagion, who, from views
Of higher power and rank,
Worship this rising sun, and give a sanction
To his invasions.
Alc. If, ye Powers divine!
Ye mark the movements of this nether world,
And bring them to account, crush, crush those vipers,
Who, singled out by a community
To guard their rights, shall, for a grasp of ore,
Or paltry office, sell them to the foe!
Phar. Each honest citizen, I grant, is thine,
And, grateful for thy boundless blessings on them,
Would serve thee with their lives; but the approach
Of this usurper, to their very walls,
Strikes them with such a dread, that even these
Implore thee to accept his proffer'd peace.
Alc. Oh, people lost to wisdom, as to glory!
Go, bring in pomp, and serve upon your knees,
This idol, that will crush you with its weight.
Mark, I abjure him! by his savage hand
My wife and children perish'd, whilst in vengeance,
I carried carnage to his very tent;
Transfix'd to earth his only son, and wore
His trappings, as a trophy of my conquest.
This torch of enmity, thus lighted 'twixt us,
The hand of time itself can ne'er extinguish.
Phar. Extinguish not, but smother for a while
Its fatal flame, and greatly sacrifice
Thy private suff'rings to the public welfare.

Alc. My wife and children lost, my country's now
My family.
Phar. Then let not that be lost.
Alc. Pharon, desist.
Phar. My noble lord, I cannot,
Must not desist, will not, since you're possess'd
Of means, to bring this insolent invader
To any terms you'll claim.
Alc. What means?
Phar. Palmira,
That blooming fair, the flow'r of all his camp,
By thee borne off in our last skirmish with him,
Seems the divine ambassadress of peace,
Sent to procure our safety. Mahomet
Has, by his heralds, thrice proposed her ransom,
And bade us fix the price.
Alc. I know it, Pharon:
And would'st thou, then, restore this noble treasure
To that barbarian,
And render beauty the reward of rapine?
Nay, smile not, friend——
Phar. My lord——
Alc. This heart, by age and grief congeal'd,
Is no more sensible to love's endearments,
Than are our barren rocks to morn's sweet dew,
That, balmy, trickles down their rugged cheeks.
Phar. My noble chief, each masterpiece of nature
Commands involuntary homage from us.
Alc. I own, a tenderness unfelt before,
A sympathetic grief, with ardent wishes
To make her happy, fill'd my widow'd bosom:
I dread her being in that monster's power,
And burn to have her hate him, like myself.
'Twas on this hour, I, at her modest suit,
Promised her audience in my own pavilion.
Pharon, go thou, meanwhile, and see the senate
Assembled straight—I'll sound them as I ought.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Room of State.

PALMIRA *discovered.*

Palm. What means this boding terror, that usurps,
In spite of me, dominion o'er my heart?
Oh, holy prophet!
Shall I ne'er more attend thy sacred lessons!
Oh Zaphna! much-loved youth! I feel for thee
As for myself—But hold, my final audit
Is now at hand—I tremble for th' event!
Here comes my judge—Now liberty, or bondage?

Enter ALCANOR.

Alc. Palmira, whence those tears? trust me, fair maid,
Thou art not fall'n into barbarians' hands:
What Mecca can afford of pomp, or pleasure,
To call attention from misfortune's lap,
Demand, and share it.

Palm. No, my generous victor!
My suit's for nothing Mecca can afford;
Pris'ner these two long months beneath your roof,
I've tasted such benignity and candour,
That, oft I've call'd my tears ingratitude.

Alc. If aught remains, that's in my pow'r to smooth
The rigour of your fate, and crown your wishes,
Why, 'twould fill
The furrows in my cheeks, and make old age
Put on its summer's garb.

Palm. Thus, low I bless thee. [*Kneeling.*

It is on you, on you alone, Alcanor,
My whole of future happiness depends:
Have pity then;
Pity, Alcanor, one, who's torn from all
That's dear or venerable to her soul;
Restore me, then, restore me to my country,
Restore me to my father, prince, and prophet.
Alc. Is slav'ry dear then? is fraud venerable?
What country?—a tumultuous wand'ring camp!
Palm. My country, sir, is not a single spot
Of such a mould, or fix'd to such a clime;
No, 'tis the social circle of my friends,
The loved community in which I'm link'd,
And in whose welfare all my wishes centre.
Alc. Excellent maid! Then Mecca be thy country.
Robb'd of my children, would Palmira deign
To let me call her child, the toil I took,
To make her destiny propitious to her,
Would lighten the rough burden of my own:
But no—you scorn my country and my laws.
Palm. Can I be yours, when not my own? Your bounties
Claim and share my gratitude—but Mahomet
Claims right o'er me of parent, prince, and prophet.
Alc. Of parent, prince, and prophet! Heav'ns! that robber
Who, a scaped felon, emulates a throne,
And, scoffer at all faiths, proclaims a new one!
Palm. Oh, cease, my lord! this blasphemous abuse
On one, whom millions, with myself, adore,
Does violence to my ear! such black profaneness
'Gainst Heav'n's interpreter, blots out remembrance
Of favours past, and nought succeeds but horror!
Alc. Oh, superstition! thy pernicious rigours,
Inflexible to reason, truth, and nature,
Banish humanity the gentlest breasts!
Palmira, I lament to see thee plunged
So deep in error.

Palm. Do you then reject
My just petition? can Alcanor's goodness
Be deaf to suff'ring virtue?
Name but the ransom,
And Mahomet will treble what you ask.
Alc. There is no ransom Mahomet can offer,
Proportion'd to the prize.

Enter PHARON.

What would'st thou, Pharon?
Phar. From yon western gate,
Which opens on Moradia's fertile plains,
Mahomet's general, Mirvan, hastes to greet thee.
Alc. Mirvan, that vile apostate!
Phar. In one hand
He holds a scymitar, the other bears
An olive branch, which, to our chiefs, he waves,
An emblem of his suit—a martial youth,
Zaphna by name, attends him for our hostage.
Palm. [*Apart.*] Zaphna! mysterious Heaven!
Phar. Mirvan advances
This way, my lord, to render you his charge.
Alc. Palmira, thou retire—Pharon, be present.
[*Exit* PALMIRA.

Enter MIRVAN.

After six years of infamous rebellion
Against thy native country, dost thou, Mirvan,
Again profane, with thy detested presence,
These sacred walls, which once thy hands defended,
But thy bad heart has vilely since betray'd?
Thou poor deserter of thy country's gods!
Thou base invader of thy country's rights!
What would'st thou have with me?
Mir. I'd pardon thee.—
Out of compassion to thy age and suff'rings,
And high regard for thy experienced valour,
Heaven's great apostle offers thee, in friendship,

A hand, could crush thee; and I come commisson'd
To name the terms of peace he deigns to tender.
Alc. He deigns to tender! insolent impostor!
Dost thou not, Mirvan, blush
To serve this wretch, this base of soul, as birth?
Mir. Mahomet's grandeur's in himself: he shines not
With borrow'd lustre.
Plunged in the night of prejudice, and bound
In fetters of hereditary faith,
My judgment slept: but when I found him born
To mould anew the prostrate universe,
I started from my dream, join'd his career,
And shared his arduous and immortal labours.
Come, embrace our faith, reign with Mahomet,
And, clothed in terrors, make the vulgar tremble.
Alc. 'Tis Mahomet, and tyrants like to Mahomet,
'Tis Mirvan, and apostates like to Mirvan,
I only would make tremble!—Is it, say'st thou,
Religion, that's the parent of this rapine,
This virulence and rage?—No; true religion
Is always mild, propitious, and humane;
Plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood,
But stoops to polish, succour, and redress,
And builds her grandeur on the public good.
Mir. If clemency delights thee, learn it here.
Though banish'd by thy voice his native city,
Though, by thy hand, robb'd of his only son,
Mahomet pardons thee; nay, farther, begs
The hatred burning 'twixt you be extinguish'd,
With reconciliation's gen'rous tear.
Alc. I know thy master's arts; his gen'rous tears,
Like the refreshing breeze that, previous, fall
To the wild outrage of o'erwhelming earthquakes,
Only forerun destruction.
Phar. Leagues he will make too——
Alc. Like other grasping tyrants, till he eyes
A lucky juncture to enlarge his bounds,

Then he'll deride them, leap o'er every tie
Of sacred guarantee, or sworn protection,
And when th' oppress'd ally implores assistance,
Beneath that mask, invade the wish'd-for realms
And, from pure friendship, take them to himself.

Mir. Mahomet fights Heav'n's battles, bends the bow
To spread Heav'n's laws, and to subject to faith,
The iron neck of error.

Alc. Lust and ambition, Mirvan, are the springs
Of all his actions, whilst, without one virtue,
Dissimulation, like a flattering painter,
Bedecks him with the colouring of them all:
This is thy master's portrait—But no more——
My soul's inexorable, and my hate,
Immortal as the cause from whence it sprang.

Mir. What cause?

Alc. The diff'rence between good and evil.

Mir. Thou talk'st to me, Alcanor, with an air
Of a stern judge, that, from his dread tribunal,
Intimidates the criminal beneath him:
Resume thy temper, act the minister,
And treat with me, as with th' ambassador
Of Heav'n's apostle, and Arabia's king.

Alc. Arabia's king! what king? who crown'd him?

Mir. Conquest.——
Whilst to the style of conq'ror, and of monarch,
Patron of peace he'd add—Name, then, the price
Of peace, and of Palmira—Boundless treasures,
The spoils of vanquish'd monarchs, and the stores
Of rifled provinces, are thrown before thee.
Our troops, with matchless ardour, hasten hither,
To lay in ruin this rebellious city;
Stem, then, the rushing torrent; Mahomet
In person, comes to claim a conference with thee,
For this good purpose.

Alc. Who? Mahomet!

Mir. Yes, he conjures thou'lt grant it.

Alc. Traitor! were I sole ruler here, in Mecca,
I'd answer thee with chastisement!
Mir. Hot man!
I pity thy false virtue—But farewell!
And, since the senate share thy pow'r in Mecca,
To their serener wisdoms I'll appeal. [*Exit.*
Alc. I'll meet thee there.—Ye sacred Pow'rs,
My country's gods, that, for three thousand years,
Have reign'd protectors of the tribe of Ishmael!
Oh, support my spirit
In that firm purpose it has always held!
To combat violence, fraud, and usurpation,
To pluck the spoil from the oppressor's jaws,
And keep my country as I found it—free! [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

PALMIRA'S *Apartment.*

Enter PALMIRA.

Palm. Cease, cease, ye streaming instruments of woe,
From your ignoble toil! Take warmth, my heart!
Collect thy scatter'd pow'rs, and brave misfortune.
In vain, the storm-tost mariner repines;
Impatience only throws
Discredit on mischance, and adds a shame
To our affliction.

Enter ZAPHNA.

Ha! all-gracious Heaven!
Thou, Zaphna! is it thou? what pitying angel
Guided thy steps to these abodes of bondage?
Zaph. Thou sov'reign of my soul, and all its pow'rs,
Object of every fear, and ev'ry wish,
Friend, sister, love, companion, all that's dear!
Do I once more behold thee, my Palmira?
Oh, I will set it down the whitest hour
That Zaphna e'er was bless'd with!
Palm. Say, my hero,
Are my ills ended then?—They are, they are!
Now Zaphna's here, I am no more a captive,
Except to him—Oh, bless'd captivity!
Zaph. Those smiles are dearer to my raptured breast,
Sweeter, those accents, to my list'ning heart,
Than all Arabia's spices to the sense!
Palm. No wonder, that my soul was so elate:
No wonder, that the cloud of grief gave way,
When thou, my sun of comfort, wert so nigh.
Zaph. Since that dire hour, when on Sabaria's strand,
The barb'rous foe deprived me of Palmira,
In what a gulph of horror and despair
Have thy imagined perils plunged my soul!
Stretch'd on expiring corses for a while,
To the deaf stream I pour'd out my complaint,
And begg'd I might be number'd with the dead
That strew'd its banks—then, starting from despair
With rage, I flew to Mahomet for vengeance;
He, for some high mysterious purpose, known
To Heaven and him alone, at length dispatch'd
The valiant Mirvan to demand a truce:
Instant, on wings of lightning I pursued him,
And enter'd as his hostage—fix'd, Palmira,
Or to redeem, or die a captive with thee.

Palm. Heroic youth!
Zaph. But how have these barbarians
Treated my fair?
Palm. With high humanity.
I in my victor found a friend—Alcanor
Has made me feel captivity in nothing
But absence from my Zaphna and my friends.
Zaph. I grieve, a soul so generous is our foe:
But now, presented as a hostage to him,
His noble bearing and humanity
Made captive of my heart: I felt, methought,
A new affection lighted in my breast,
And wonder'd whence the infant ardour sprang.
Palm. Yet gen'rous as he is, not all my pray'rs,
Not all the tears I lavish at his feet,
Can move him to restore me——
Zaph. But he shall;
Let the barbarian know he shall, Palmira;
The god of Mahomet, our divine protector,
Whose still triumphant standard I have borne
O'er piles of vanquish'd infidels—that pow'r
Which brought unnumber'd battlements to earth,
Will humble Mecca too.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, noble Mirvan,
Do my Palmira's chains sit loose upon her?
Say, is it freedom? This presumptuous senate——
Mir. Has granted all we ask'd—all we could wish;
The truce obtain'd, the gates to Mahomet
Flew open.
Zaph. Mahomet in Mecca, say'st thou?
Once more in Mecca!
Palm. Transport! bid him welcome.
Zaph. Thy suff'rings, then, are o'er, the ebb is past,
And a full tide of hope flows in upon us.
Palm. But where's the prophet?

Mir. Reclined in yonder grot, that joins the temple,
Attended by his chiefs.
Zaph. There let us haste,
With duteous step, and bow ourselves before him.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A spacious Grotto.

MAHOMET *discovered with the Alcoran before him.*

Mah. Glorious hypocrisy! what fools are they,
Who, fraught with lustful or ambitious views,
Wear not thy specious mask—Thou, Alcoran!
Hast won more battles, ta'en more cities for me,
Than thrice my feeble numbers had achieved,
Without the succour of thy sacred impulse.

Enter HERCIDES, AMMON, *and* ALI.

Invincible supporters of our grandeur!
My faithful chiefs, Hercides, Ammon, Ali!
Go, and instruct this people in my name,
That faith may dawn, and, like a morning star,
Be herald to my rising.—Lo, Palmira!
[*Exeunt* HERCIDES, AMMON, *and* ALI.
Her angel-face, with unfeign'd blushes spread,
Proclaims the purity that dwells within.

Enter MIRVAN, ZAPHNA, *and* PALMIRA.

The hand of war was ne'er before so barbarous,
Never bore from me half so rich a spoil,
As thee, my fair. [*To* PALMIRA.
Palm. Joy to my heavenly guardian!

Joy to the world, that Mahomet's in Mecca!
Mah. My child, let me embrace thee—How's this? Zaphna!
Thou here!
Zaph. [*Kneeling.*] My father, chief, and holy pontiff!
The God, that thou'rt inspired by, march'd before me.
Ready, for thee, to wade through seas of danger,
Or cope with death itself, I hither hasten'd
To yield myself an hostage, and with zeal
Prevent thy order.
Mah. 'Twas not well, rash boy!
He, that does more than I command him, errs
As much as he who falters in his duty.
I obey
My God—implicitly obey thou me.
Palm. Pardon, my gracious lord, his well-meant ardour.
Brought up from tender infancy, beneath
The shelter of thy sacred patronage,
Zaphna and I've been animated still
By the same sentiments.
Mah. Palmira, 'tis enough; I read thy heart—
Be not alarm'd; though burden'd with the cares
Of thrones and altars, still my guardian eye
Will watch o'er thee, as o'er the universe.
Follow my gen'rals, Zaphna. Fair Palmira,
Retire, and pay your pow'rful vows to Heav'n,
And dread no wrongs, but from Alcanor.
[*Exeunt* ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA *separately.*
Mirvan——
Attend thou here—'Tis time, my trusty soldier,
My long-tried friend, to lay unfolded to thee,
The close resolves and councils of my heart.
Prepossession, friend,
Reigns monarch of the million—Mecca's crowd
Gaze at my rapid victories, and think
Some awful pow'r directs my arm to conquest;

But whilst our friends once more renew their efforts
To win the wav'ring people to our interest,
What think'st thou, say, of Zaphna and Palmira?
Mir. As of thy most resign'd and faithful vassals.
Mah. Oh, Mirvan! They're the deadliest of my foes!
Mir. How?
Mah. Yes, they love each other.
Mir. Well—what crime?
Mah. What crime, dost say? Learn all my frailty, then—
My life's a combat: keen austerity
Subjects my nature to abstemious bearings:
Or on the burning sands, or desert rocks,
With thee I bear th' inclemency of climates,
Freeze at the pole, or scorch beneath the line.
For all these toils, love only can retaliate,
The only consolation or reward,
Fruit of my labours, idol of my incense,
And sole divinity that I adore;
Know, then, that I prefer this young Palmira,
To all the ripen'd beauties that attend *me*,
Dwell on her accents, dote upon her smiles,
And am not mine, but *hers*. Now, judge, my friend,
How vast the jealous transports of thy master,
When, at his feet, he daily hears this charmer
Avow a foreign love, and, insolent,
Give Mahomet a rival!
Mir. How! and Mahomet
Not instantly revenge——
Mah. Ah! should he not?
But, better to detest him, know him better:
Learn then, that both my rival and my love,
Sprang from the loins of this audacious tyrant.
Mir. Alcanor!
Mah. Is their father; old Hercides,
To whose sage institution I commit
My captive infants, late reveal'd it to me—

Perdition! I myself light up their flame,
And fed it till I set myself on fire.
Well, means must be employ'd: but see, the father;
He comes this way, and launches from his eye
Malignant sparks of enmity and rage.
Mirvan, see all ta'en care of; let Hercides
With his escort, beset yon gate; bid Ali
Make proper disposition round the temple;
This done, return, and render me account
Of what success we meet with 'mongst the people.
Then, Mirvan, we'll determine or to loose
Or bridle in our vengeance as it suits.

[*Exit* MIRVAN.

Enter ALCANOR.

Why dost thou start, Alcanor? whence that horror?
Approach, old man, without a blush, since Heav'n,
For some high end, decrees our future union.

Alc. I blush not for myself, but thee, thou tyrant;
For thee, bad man! who comest with serpent guile,
To sow dissention in the realms of peace;
Thy very name sets families at variance,
'Twixt son and father bursts the bonds of nature,
And scares endearment from the nuptial pillow!
And is it, insolent dissembler! thus
Thou comest to give the sons of Mecca peace;
And me an unknown god?

Mah. Were I to answer any but Alcanor,
That unknown god should speak in thunder for me,
But here with thee I'd parley as a man.

Alc. What canst thou say? what urge in thy defence?
What right hast thou received to plant new faiths,
Or lay a claim to royalty and priesthood?

Mah. The right that a resolved and tow'ring spirit
Has o'er the grovelling instinct of the vulgar——

Alc. Patience, good Heav'ns! have I not known thee, Mahomet,

When void of wealth, inheritance, or fame,
Rank'd with the lowest of the low at Mecca?

Mah. Dost thou not know, thou haughty, feeble man,
That the low insect, lurking in the grass,
And the imperial eagle, which aloft
Ploughs the ethereal plain, are both alike
In the Eternal eye?

Alc. [*Apart.*] What sacred truth, from what polluted lips!

Mah. Hear me; thy Mecca trembles at my name;
If therefore thou would'st save thyself or city,
Embrace my proffer'd friendship——What to-day
I thus solicit, I'll command to-morrow.

Alc. Contract with thee a friendship! frontless man!
Know'st thou a god, can work that miracle?

Mah. I do—Necessity—thy interest.

Alc. Interest is thy god, equity is mine.
Propose the tie of this unnatural union;
Say, is't the loss of thy ill-fated son,
Who, in the field, fell victim to my rage,
Or the dear blood of my poor captive children,
Shed by thy butchering hands?

Mah. Ay, 'tis thy children.
Mark me then well, and learn the important secret,
Which I'm sole master of——Thy children live.

Alc. Live!

Mah. Yes—both live——

Alc. What say'st thou? Both!

Mah. Ay, both.

Alc. And dost thou not beguile me?

Mah. No, old man.

Alc. Propitious Heav'ns! Say, Mahomet, for now
Methinks I could hold endless converse with thee,
Say, what's their portion, liberty or bondage?

Mah. Bred in my camp, and tutor'd in my law,

I hold the balance of their destinies,
And now 'tis on the turn——their lives or deaths——
'Tis thine to say which shall preponderate.
Alc. Mine! can I save them? name the mighty ransom——
If I must bear their chains, double the weight,
And I will kiss the hand, that puts them on;
Or if my streaming blood must be the purchase,
Drain ev'ry sluice and channel of my body,
My swelling veins will burst to give it passage!
Mah. I'll tell thee then——renounce thy Pagan faith,
Abolish thy vain gods, and——
Alc. Ha!
Mah. Nay, more,
Surrender Mecca to me, quit this temple,
Assist me to impose upon the world,
Thunder my Koran to the gazing crowd,
Proclaim me for their prophet and their king,
And be a glorious pattern of credulity
To Korah's stubborn tribe. These terms perform'd,
Thy son shall be restored, and Mahomet's self
Will deign to wed thy daughter.
Alc. Hear me, Mahomet——
I am a father, and this bosom boasts
A heart as tender as e'er parent bore.
After a fifteen years of anguish for them,
Once more to view my children, clasp them to me,
And die in their embraces——melting thought!
But were I doom'd or to enslave my country,
And help to spread black error o'er the earth,
Or to behold these blood-embrued hands
Deprive me of them both——Know me then, Mahomet,
I'd not admit a doubt to cloud my choice——
[*Looking earnestly at* MAHOMET *for some time before he speaks.*
Farewell. [*Exit* ALCANOR.
Mah. Why, fare thee well then——churlish dotard!

Inexorable fool! Now, by my arms,
I will have great revenge; I'll meet thy scorn
With treble retribution!

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, my Mirvan,
What say'st thou to it now?
Mir. Why, that Alcanor
Or we must fall.
Mah. Fall then the obdurate rebel!
Mir. The truce expires to-morrow, when Alcanor
Again is Mecca's master, and has vow'd
Destruction on thy head: the senate too
Have pass'd thy doom.
Mah. Those heart-chill'd paltry babblers,
Placed on the bench of sloth, with ease can nod
And vote a man to death; why don't the cowards
Stand me in yonder plain?—With half their numbers
I drove them headlong to their walls for shelter.
Perish Alcanor!
He marbled up the pliant populace;
Those dupes of novelty will bend before us,
Like osiers to a hurricane——
Mir. No time
Is to be lost.
Mah. But for a proper arm.
Mir. What think'st thou, then, of Zaphna?
Mah. Of Zaphna, say'st thou?
Mir. Yes, Alcanor's hostage——
He can in private do thee vengeance on him;
He's a slave
To thy despotic faith, and, urged by thee,
However mild his nature may appear,
Howe'er humane and noble is his spirit,
Or strong his reason, where allow'd to reason,
He would, for Heaven's sake, martyr half mankind.
Mah. The brother of Palmira!
Mir. Yes, that brother,

The only son of thy outrageous foe,
And the incestuous rival of thy love.
Mah. I hate the stripling, loath his very name;
The manes of my son, too, cry for vengeance
On the cursed sire; but then thou know'st my love,
Know'st from whose blood she sprang; this staggers, Mirvan;
And yet I'm here surrounded with a gulf
Ready to swallow me; come, too, in quest
Of altars and a throne—What must be done!—
My warring passions, like contending clouds,
When fraught with thunder's fatal fuel, burst
Upon themselves, and rend me with the shock.
Mirvan, sound this youth;
Touch not at once upon the startling purpose,
But make due preparation.
Mir. I'll attack him
With all the forces of enthusiasm;
There lies our strength.
Mah. First then, a solemn vow
To act whatever Heav'n by me enjoins him;
Next omens, dreams, and visions, may be pleaded;
Hints too of black designs by this Alcanor
Upon Palmira's virtue, and his life——
But to the proof—Be now propitious, fortune,
Then love, ambition, vengeance, jointly triumph.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Grand Apartment.

Enter ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

Zaph. Alcanor claims a private conference with us!
What has he to unfold?
Palm. I tremble, Zaphna.
Zaph. Time press'd too, did he say?
Palm. He did; then cast
A look so piercing on me, it o'erwhelm'd
My face with deep confusion; this he mark'd,
Then, starting, left me.
Zaph. [*Aside.*] Ha! this gives me fear
That Mirvan's jealousies are too well grounded;
But I must not distract her tender bosom
With visionary terrors. [*To* PALMIRA.] Both in private!
Palm. In private both.
Zaph. Her virtue and my life! [*Apart.*
It cannot be; so reverend a form
Could ne'er be pander to such black devices.
Palm. But let us shun it, Zaphna; much I fear
Alcanor has deceived us: dread the treachery
Of this blood-thirsty senate. Trust me, Zaphna,
They have sworn the extirpation of our faith,
Nor care by what vile means—

Zaph. My soul's best treasure,
For whose security my every thought
Is up in arms, regardless of my own;
Shun thou Alcanor's presence. This hour, Palmira,
Mirvan, by order of our royal pontiff,
Prepares to solemnise some act of worship
Of a more hallow'd and mysterious kind
Than will admit of vulgar eye; myself
Alone am honour'd to assist.
Palm. Alone!
Zaph. Yes, to devote myself by solemn vow,
For some great act, of which my fair's the prize.
Palm. What act?
Zaph. No matter, since my loved Palmira
Shall be the glorious recompence—
Palm. Oh Zaphna!
Methinks I do not like this secret vow.
Why must not I be present? were I with thee,
I should not be so anxious;
For, trust me, Zaphna, my affection for thee
Is of that pure disinterested nature,
So free from passion's taint, I have no one wish
To have thee more than thus, have thee my friend,
Share thy loved converse, wait upon thy welfare,
And view thee with a sister's spotless eye.
Zaph. Angelic excellence!
Palm. And let me tell thee,
This Mirvan, this fierce Mirvan, gives me terrors:
So far from tendering consolation to me,
His theme is blood and slaughter. As I met him
His eyes flamed fury, whilst in dubious phrase
He thus bespoke me—The destroying angel
Must be let loose—Palmira, Heaven ordains
Some glorious deed for thee yet hid in darkness;
Learn an implicit rev'rence for its will,
And, above all, I warn thee, fear for Zaphna.
Zaph. What could he mean? can I believe,
nor,

Thy fair deportment but a treach'rous mask?
Yet spite of all the rage that ought to fire me
Against this rebel to our faith and prophet,
I have held me happy in his friendship,
And bondage wore the livery of choice.

Palm. How has Heaven fraught our love-linked hearts, my Zaphna,
With the same thoughts, aversions, and desires!
But for thy safety and our dread religion,
That thunders hatred to all infidels,
With great remorse I should accuse Alcanor.

Zaph. Let us shake off this vain remorse, Palmira,
Resign ourselves to Heaven, and act its pleasure.
The hour is come that I must pledge my vow:
Doubt not but the Supreme, who claims this service,
Will prove propitious to our chaste endearments.
Farewell, my love; I fly to gain the summit
Of earth's felicity—to gain Palmira. [*Exit.*

Palm. Where'er I turn, 'tis all suspicion.
Like one benighted 'midst a place of tombs,
I gaze around me, start at ev'ry motion,
And seem hemm'd in by visionary spectres.
All-righteous Power, whom trembling I adore,
And blindly follow, oh deliver me
From these heart-rending terrors!—Ha! who's here?

Enter MAHOMET.

'Tis he! 'tis Mahomet himself! kind Heaven
Has sent him to my aid—My gracious lord!
Protect the dear, dear idol of my soul,
Save Zaphna; guard him from——

Mah. From what!—why Zaphna?
Whence this vain terror? is he not with us?

Palm. Oh, sir, you double now my apprehensions!
Those broken accents, and that eager look,
Show you have anguish smoth'ring at the heart,
And prove for once that Mahomet's a mortal.

Mah. [*Apart.*] Ha! shall I turn a traitor to myself?—
Oh, woman! woman!—Hear me—ought I not
To be enraged at thy profane attachment?
How could thy breast, without the keenest sting,
Harbour one thought not dictated by me?
Is that young mind, I took such toil to form,
Turn'd an ingrate and infidel at once?
Away, rebellious maid!——
Palm. What dost thou say,
My royal lord? Thus, prostrate at your feet,
Let me implore forgiveness, if in aught
I have offended: talk not to me thus;—
A frown from thee, my father and my king,
Is death to poor Palmira. Say then, Mahomet,
Didst thou not, in this very place, permit him
To render me his vows?
Mah. [*Apart.*] How the soft trait'ress racks me!—Rise, Palmira——
[*Apart.*] Down, rebel love! I must be calm—Come hither;
Beware, rash maid, of such imprudent steps;
They lead to guilt. What wild pernicious errors
Mayn't the heart lead to, if not greatly watch'd!
Palm. In loving Zaphna, sure it cannot err.
Mah. [*Apart.*] Zaphna again! Furies! I shall relapse,
And make her witness of my weakness!
Palm. Sir!
What sudden start of passion arms that eye?
Mah. Oh, nothing: pray, retire a while: take courage:
I'm not at all displeased: 'twas but to sound
The depth of thy young heart. I praise thy choice:
Trust then thy dearest interest to my bosom;
But know, your fate depends on your obedience.
If I have been a guardian to your youth,
If all my lavish bounties past weigh aught,

Deserve the future blessings which await you.
Howe'er the voice of Heaven dispose of Zaphna,
Confirm him in the path where duty leads,
That he may keep his vow, and merit thee.
Palm. Distrust him not, my sovereign; noble Zaphna
Disdains to lag in love or glory's course.
Mah. Enough of words——
Palm. As boldly I've avow'd
The love I bear that hero at your feet,
I'll now to him, and fire his gen'rous breast,
To prove the duty he has sworn to thee. [*Exit.*
Mah. What could I say? such sweet simplicity
Lured down my rage, and innocently wing'd
The arrow through my heart. And shall I bear this?
Be made the sport of cursed Alcanor's house?
Check'd in my rapid progress by the sire,
Supplanted in my love by this rash boy,
And made a gentle pander to the daughter?
Perdition on the whole detested race!

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Now, Mahomet, is the time to seize on Mecca,
Crush this Alcanor, and enjoy Palmira!
This night the old enthusiast offers incense
To his vain gods, in sacred Caabo:
Zaphna, who flames with zeal for Heaven and thee,
May be won o'er to seize that lucky moment.
Mah. He shall; it must be so; he's born to act
The glorious crime; and let him be at once
The instrument and victim of the murder.
My law, my love, my vengeance, my own safety,
Have doom'd it so—But, Mirvan, dost thou think
His youthful courage, nursed in superstition,
Can e'er be work'd——
Mir. I tell thee, Mahomet,
He's tutor'd to accomplish thy design.

Palmira, too, who thinks thy will is Heaven's,
Will nerve his arm to execute thy pleasure.
Mah. Did'st thou engage him by a solemn vow?
Mir. I did, with all th' enthusiastic pomp
Thy law enjoins; then gave him, as from thee,
A consecrated sword, to act thy will.
Oh, he is burning with religious fury!
Mah. But hold! he comes—— [*Exit* MIRVAN.

Enter ZAPHNA.

Child of that awful and tremendous Power,
Whose laws I publish, whose behests proclaim,
Listen whilst I unfold his sacred will:
'Tis thine to vindicate his way to man,
'Tis thine his injured worship to avenge.
Zaph. Thou lord of nations, delegate of Heaven,
Sent to shed day o'er the benighted world,
Oh, say in what can Zaphna prove his duty!
Instruct me how a frail earth-prison'd mortal
Can or avenge or vindicate a god.
Mah. By thy weak arm he deigns to prove his cause,
And launch his vengeance on blaspheming rebels.
Zaph. What glorious action, what illustrious danger
Does that Supreme, whose image thou, demand?
Place me, oh place me in the front of battle,
'Gainst odds innumerable! try me there;
Or, if a single combat claim my might,
The stoutest Arab may step forth, and see
If Zaphna fail to greet him as he ought.
Mah. Oh, greatly said, my son! 'tis inspiration!
But heed me: 'tis not by a glaring act
Of human valour Heaven has will'd to prove thee;
This infidels themselves may boast, when led
By ostentation, rage, or brute-like rashness.
To do whate'er Heaven gives in sacred charge,

Nor dare to sound its fathomless decrees,
This, and this only's meritorious zeal.
Attend, adore, obey; thou shalt be arm'd
By death's remorseless angel, which awaits me.
Zaph. Speak out, pronounce! what victim must I offer?
What tyrant sacrifice? whose blood requir'st thou?
Mah. The blood of a detested infidel,
A murderer, a foe to Heaven and me,
A wretch who slew my child, blasphemes my god,
And, like a huge Colossus, bears a world
Of impious opposition to my faith:
The blood of cursed Alcanor!
Zaph. I!—Alcanor!
Mah. What! dost thou hesitate! Rash youth, beware!
He, that deliberates, is sacrilegious.
Far, far from me, be those audacious mortals,
Who, for themselves, would impiously judge,
Or see with their own eyes; who dares to think,
Was never born a proselyte for me.
Know who I am; know, on this very spot,
I've charged thee with the just decree of Heaven,
And when that Heaven requires of thee no more
Than the bare off'ring of its deadliest foe,
Nay, thy foe too, and mine, why dost thou balance
As thy own father were the victim claim'd!
Go, vile idolater! false Musselman!
Go, seek another master, a new faith!
Zaph. Oh, Mahomet!
Mah. Just when the prize is ready,
When fair Palmira's destined to thy arms——
But what's Palmira? or what's Heaven to thee,
Thou poor weak rebel to thy faith and love!
Go, serve and cringe to our detested foe!
Zaph. Oh, pardon, Mahomet! methinks I hear
The oracle of Heaven—It shall be done!

Mah. Obey then, strike! and, for his impious blood,
Palmira's charms and Paradise be thine. [*Exit.*
Zaph. Soft! let me think—This duty wears the face
Of something more than monstrous—Pardon, Heaven!
To sacrifice an innocent old man,
Weigh'd down with age, unsuccour'd, and unarm'd!
When I am hostage for his safety too!——
No matter—Heaven has chose me for the duty;
My vow is past, and must be straight fulfill'd.
Ye stern, relentless ministers of wrath,
Spirits of vengeance! by whose ruthless hands
The haughty tyrants of the earth have bled,
Come to my succour, to my flaming zeal
Join your determined courage!
And thou, angel
Of Mahomet, exterminating angel!
That mow'st down nations to prepare his passage,
Support my falt'ring will, harden my heart,
Lest nature pity, plead Alcanor's cause,
And wrest the dagger from me,
Ha! who comes here?

Enter ALCANOR.

Alc. Whence, Zaphna, that deep gloom,
That, like a blasting mildew on the ear
Of promised harvest, blackens o'er thy visage?
Grieve not that here, through form, thou art confined;
I hold thee not as hostage, but as friend,
And make thy safety partner with my own.
Zaph. [*Apart.*] And make my safety partner with thy own!
Alc. The bloody carnage, by this truce suspended,
For a few moments, like a torrent, check'd
In its full flow, will, with redoubled strength,
Bear all before it——

In this impending scene of public horror,
Be then, dear youth, these mansions thy asylum!
I'll be thy hostage now, and, with my life,
Will answer that no mischief shall befall thee.
I know not why, but thou art precious to me.
Zaph. Heaven! duty! gratitude! humanity!
[*Apart.*
What dost thou say, Alcanor? Did'st thou say
That thy own roof should shield me from the tempest?
That thy own life stood hostage for my safety?
Alc. Why thus amazed at my compassion for thee?
I am a man myself, and that's enough
To make me feel the woes of other men,
And labour to redress them——
Zaph. [*Apart.*] What melody these accents make!
[*To* ALCANOR.] Can then a foe to Mahomet's sacred law
Be virtue's friend?
Alc. Thow know'st but little, Zaphna,
If thou dost think true virtue is confined
To climes or systems; no, it flows spontaneous,
Like life's warm stream, throughout the whole creation,
And beats the pulse of every healthful heart
How can'st thou, Zaphna, worship for thy god
A being claiming cruelty and murders
From his adorers? Such is thy master's god——
Zaph. [*Apart.*] Oh, my relenting soul! thou'rt almost thaw'd
From thy resolve—I pray you, sir, no more.
Peace, reason, peace!
Alc. [*Apart.*] The more I view him, talk with him, observe
His understanding towering 'bove his age,
The more my breast takes interest in his welfare.
[*To* ZAPHNA] Zaphna, come near—I oft have thought to ask thee

To whom thou owest thy birth, whose gen'rous blood
Swells thy young veins, and mantles at thy heart.
Zaph. That dwells in darkness; no one friendly beam
E'er gave me glimpse from whom I am descended.
The camp of godlike Mahomet has been
My cradle and my country; whilst, of all
His captive infants, no one more has shared
The sunshine of his clemency and care.
Alc. I do not blame thy gratitude, young man
But why was Mahomet thy benefactor!
Why was not I! I envy him that glory.
Why, then, this impious man has been a father,
Alike to thee and to the fair Palmira.
Zaph. Oh!
Alc. What's the cause, my Zaphna, of that sigh
And all that language of a smother'd anguish?
Why didst thou snatch away thy cordial eye,
That shone on me before?
Zaph. [*Apart.*] Oh, my torn heart!
Palmira's name revives the racking thought
Of my near blunted purpose.
Alc. Come, my friend;
The flood-gates of destruction soon thrown ope,
Will pour in ruin on that curse of nations.
If I can save but thee, and fair Palmira,
From this o'erflowing tide, let all the rest
Of his abandon'd minions be the victims
For your deliverance—I must save your blood.
Zaph. [*Apart.*] Just Heaven! and is't not I must shed his blood?
Alc. Nay, tremble if thou darest to hesitate.
Follow me straight.

Enter PHARON.

Phar. Alcanor, read that letter,
Put in my hands this moment by an Arab.

With utmost stealth, and air bespeaking somewhat
Of high importance.

Alc. [*Reads.*] Whence is this?—Hercides!
Cautious, my eyes! be sure you're not mistaken
In what you here insinuate. Gracious Heaven!
Will then thy providence at length o'errule
My wayward fate, and, by one matchless blessing,
Sweeten the suff'rings of a threescore years!

[*After looking for some time earnestly at* ZAPHNA.

Follow me.

Zaph. Thee!—But Mahomet—

Alc. Thy life,
And all its future bliss, dwells on this moment.
Follow, I say. [*Exeunt* ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

Enter MIRVAN *and his Attendants, hastily, on the other Side of the Stage.*

Mir. [*To* ZAPHNA]. Traitor, turn back! what means
This conference with the foe? To Mahomet
Away this instant; he commands thy presence.

Zaph. [*Apart.*] Where am I? Heavens! how shall I now resolve!
How act! A precipice on every side
Awaits me, and the first least step's perdition.

Mir. Young man, our prophet brooks not such delay;
Go, stop the bolt that's ready to be launch'd
On thy rebellious head.

Zaph. Yes, and renounce
This horrid vow that's poison to my soul.

[*Exit, with* MIRVAN, *&c.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Temple.

Enter ZAPHNA, *with a drawn Sword in his Hand.*

Zaph. Well then, it must be so; I must discharge
This cruel duty—Mahomet enjoins it,
And Heaven, through him, demands it of my hands.
Horrid, though sacred, act!—my soul shrinks back,
And won't admit conviction.
Oh, dire obedience!
Why, duty, art thou thus at war with nature?

Enter PALMIRA.

Thou here, Palmira! Oh, what fatal transport
Leads thee to this sad place, these dark abodes,
Sacred to death? Thou hast no bus'ness here.
Palm. Oh, Zaphna, fear and love have been my guides!
What horrid sacrifice is this enjoin'd thee?
What victim does the god of Mahomet
Claim from thy tender hand?
Zaph. Oh, my guardian angel,
Speak, resolve me;
How can assassination be a virtue?
How can the gracious Parent of mankind
Delight in mankind's sufferings? Mayn't this prophet,

This great announcer of his heavenly will,
Mistake it once?
Palm. Oh, tremble to examine.
He sees our hearts—To doubt is to blaspheme.
Zaph. Be steady then, my soul, firm to thy purpose.
Come forth, thou foe to Mahomet and Heaven,
And meet the doom thy rebel faith deserves:
Come forth, Alcanor.
Palm. Who, Alcanor?
Zaph. Yes.
Palm. The good Alcanor?
Zaph. Curse on his pagan virtues! he must
So Mahomet commands: and yet methinks
Some other deity arrests my arm,
And whispers to my heart—Zaphna, forbear!
Palm. Distracting state!
Zaph. Alas! my dear Palmira,
I'm weak, and shudder at this bloody business.
Help me, oh help, Palmira! I am torn,
Distracted, with this conflict.
Zeal, horror, love, and pity seize my breast,
And drag it different ways. Alas, Palmira,
You see me tossing on a sea of passions;
'Tis thine, my angel, to appease this tempest,
Fix my distracted will, and teach me—
Palm. What!
What can I teach thee in this strife of passions?
O Zaphna! I revere our holy prophet,
Think all his laws are register'd in heaven,
And every mandate minted in the skies.
Zaph. But then to break through hospitality,
And murder him by whom we are protected!
Palm. Oh, poor Alcanor! gen'rous, good Alcanor!
My heart bleeds for thee!
Zaph. Know then, unless I act this horrid scene,
Unless I plunge this dagger in the breast
Of that old man, I must—I must—

Palm. What—
Zaph. Must, Palmira——
(O agonising thought!) lose thee for ever!
Palm. Am I the price of good Alcanor's blood?
Zaph. So Mahomet ordains.
Palm. Horrible dowry!
Zaph. Thou know'st the curse our prophet has denounced,
Of endless tortures on the disobedient;
Thou know'st with what an oath I've bound myself
To vindicate his laws, extirpate all
That dare oppose his progress; say then, fair one,
Thou tutoress divine, instruct me how,
How to obey my chief, perform my oath,
Yet list to mercy's call.
Palm. This rends my heart.
Zaph. How to avoid being banish'd thee for ever.
Palm. Oh, save me from that thought! must that e'er be?
Zaph. It must not: thou hast now pronounced his doom.
Palm. What doom?—Have I!
Zaph. Yes, thou hast seal'd his death.
Palm. I seal his death!—Did I?
Zaph. 'Twas Heaven spoke by thee; thou'rt its oracle,
And I'll fulfil its laws. This is the hour
In which he pays, at the adjoining altar,
Black rites to his imaginary gods.
Follow me not, Palmira.
Palm. I must follow;
I will not, dare not, leave thee.
Zaph. Gentle maid,
I beg thee fly these walls; thou can'st not bear
This horrid scene—Oh, these are dreadful moments
Begone—quick—this way—
Palm. No, I follow thee,

Retread thy every footstep, though they lead
To the dark gulf of death.
Zaph. Thou matchless maid!—to the dire trial then. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Inner Part of the Temple, with a Pagan Altar and Images.

ALCANOR *addressing himself to the Idols.*

Alc. Eternal powers! that deign to bless these mansions,
Protectors of the sons of Ishmael,
Crush, crush this blasphemous invader's force,
And turn him back with shame. If power be yours,
Oh! shield your injured votaries, and lay
Oppression bleeding at your altar's foot.

Enter ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

Palm. [*Entering.*] Act not this bloody deed: oh save him, save him!
Zaph. Save him, and lose both Paradise and thee!
Palm. Hah, yon' he stands—Oh! Zaphna, all my blood
Is frozen at the sight!
Alc. 'Tis in your own behalf that I implore
The terrors of your might; swift, swiftly
Pour vengeance on this vile apostate's head,
Zaph. Hear how the wretch blasphemes! So, now——

Palm. Hold, Zaphna!
Zaph. Let me go—
Palm. I cannot—cannot.
Alc. But if, for reasons which dim-sighted mortals
Can't look into, you'll crown this daring rebel
With royalty and priesthood, take my life:
And if, ye gracious powers! you've aught of bliss
In store for me, at my last hour permit me
To see my children, pour my blessing on them,
Expire in their dear arms, and let them close
These eyes, which then would wish no after sight.
Palm. His children, did he say?
Zaph. I think he did——
Alc. For this I'll at your altar pay my vows,
And make it smoke with incense.
[*Retires behind the altar.*
Zaph. [*Drawing his sword.*] Now let me strike.
Palm. Stay but one moment, Zaphna.
Zaph. It must not be—unhand me.
Palm. What to do?
Zaph. To serve my god and king, and merit thee.
[*Breaking from* PALMIRA, *and going towards the altar, he starts, and stops short.*
Ha! what are ye, ye terrifying shades?
What means this lake of blood that lies before me?
Palm. Oh Zaphna! let us fly these horrid roofs.
Zaph. No, no—Go on, ye ministers of death;
Lead me the way; I'll follow ye.
Palm. Stay, Zaphna;
Heap no more horrors on me; I'm expiring
Beneath the load.
Zaph. Be hush'd—the altar trembles!
What means that omen! does it spur to murder,
Or would it rein me back? No, 'tis the voice
Of Heaven itself that chides my ling'ring hand.
Now send up thither all thy vows, Palmira,
Whilst I obey its will, and give the stroke.
[*Goes out behind the altar, after* ALCANOR.

Palm. What vows? will Heaven receive a murderer's vows?
For, sure, I'm such, whilst I prevent not murder.
Why beats my heart thus? what soft voice is this
That's waken'd in my soul, and preaches mercy?
If Heaven demands his life, dare I oppose?
Is it my place to judge?—Hah! that dire groan
Proclaims the bloody bus'ness is about.
Zaphna! oh, Zaphna!

Enter ZAPHNA.

Zaph. Ha! where am I?
Who calls me? where's Palmira! she's not here:
What fiend has snatch'd her from me?
Palm. Heavens! he raves!
Dost thou not know me, Zaphna? her, who lives
For thee alone?—Why dost thou gaze thus on me?
Zaph. Where are we?
Palm. Hast thou, then, discharged
The horrid duty?
Zaph. What dost thou say?
Palm. Alcanor——
Zaph. Alcanor! what Alcanor?
Palm. Gracious Heaven,
Look down upon him!
Let's begone, my Zaphna—
Let's fly this place.
Zaph. Oh! whither fly? to whom?
D'ye see these hands? who will receive these hands?
Palm. Oh, come, and let me wash them with my tears!
Zaph. Who art thou? let me lean on thee—I find
My powers returning. Is it thou, Palmira?
Where have I been? what have I done?
Palm. I know not:
Think on't no more.
Zaph. But I must think, and talk on't too, Palmira.
I seized the victim by his hoary locks—

(Thou, Heaven, didst will it)
Then, shuddering with horror, buried straight
The poniard in his breast. I had redoubled
The bloody plunge——
But that the venerable sire pour'd forth
So piteous a groan!—look'd so, Palmira——
And with a feeble voice cried,—Is it Zaphna?
I could no more. Oh! hadst thou seen, my love,
The fell, fell dagger in his bosom—view'd
His dying face, where sat such dignity,
Clothed with compassion tow'rds his base assassin,
[*Throwing himself on the ground.*
The dire remembrance weighs me to the earth——
Here, let me die!

Palm. Rise, my loved Zaphna! rise,
And let us fly to Mahomet for protection:
If we are found in these abodes of slaughter,
Tortures and death attend us!—let us fly!

Zaph. [*Starting up.*] I did fly at that blasting sight, Palmira,
When, drawing out the fatal steel, he cast
Such tender looks! I fled—the fatal steel,
The voice, the tender looks, the bleeding victim,
Blessing his murderer—I could not fly:
No, they clung to me, rived my throbbing heart,
And set my brain on fire!—What have we done?

Palm. Hark! what's that noise? I tremble for thy life!
Oh! in the name of love, by all the ties,
Those sacred ties, that bind thee mine for ever,
I do conjure thee, follow me!

Enter ALCANOR, *from behind the Altar, leaning against it, with the bloody Sword in his Hand.*

Zaph. Ha! look, Palmira! see, what object's that,
Which bears upon my tortured sight? Is't he,
Or is't his bloody manes come to haunt us?

Palm. 'Tis he, himself, poor wretch! struggling with death,
And feebly crawling tow'rds us. Let me fly,
And yield what help I can! let me support thee,
Thou much-lamented, injured, good old man!

Zaph. Why don't I move? my feet are rooted here,
And all my frame is struck and wither'd up
As with a lightning's blast!

Alc. My gentle maid,
Wilt thou support me?
Weep not, my Palmira.

Palm. I could weep tears of blood, if that would serve thee.

Alc. [*Sitting down.*] Zaphna, come hither; thou hast ta'en my life,
For what offence, or what one thought towards thee,
That anger or malevolence gave birth,
Heaven knows I am unconscious. Do not look so;
I see thou dost relent.

Enter PHARON, *hastily.*

Phar. [*Starting back.*] Ha! 'tis too late then!

Alc. 'Would I could see Hercides!—Pharon, lo,
Thy martyr'd friend, by his distemper'd hand,
Is now expiring.

Phar. Dire, unnatural crime!
Oh, wretched parricide!—Behold thy father!
[*Pointing to* ALCANOR.

Zaph. My father!

Palm. Father? ha!

Alc. Mysterious Heaven!

Phar. Hercides, dying by the hand of Mirvan,
Who slew him, lest he should betray the secret,
Saw me approach, and in the pangs of death,
Cried, Fly, and save Alcanor; wrest the sword
From Zaphna's hands, if 'tis not yet too late,
That's destined for his death; then let him know
That Zaphna and Palmira are his children.

Palm. Dost hear that, Zaphna?
Zaph. 'Tis enough, my fate!
Can'st thou aught more?
Alc. Oh, nature! oh, my children!
By what vile instigations wert thou driven,
Unhappy Zaphna, to this bloody action?
Zaph. [*Falling at his father's feet.*] Oh, I cannot speak!
Restore me, sir, restore that damned weapon,
That I, for once, may make it, as I ought,
An instrument of justice.
Palm. [*Kneeling.*] Oh, my father!
Strike here!—the crime was mine! 'twas I, alone,
That work'd his will to this unnatural deed!
Zaph. Strike your assassins——
Alc. I embrace my children,
And joy to see them, though my life's the forfeit.
Rise, children, rise and live! live to revenge
Your father's death!—But, in the name of nature,
By the remains of this paternal blood,
That's oozing from my wound, raise not your hands
'Gainst your own being. Zaphna, would'st thou do me
A second deadlier mischief?
Self-slaughter can't atone for parricide.
Thy undermined arm han't quite fulfill'd
Its bigot purpose; I hope to live, to animate
Our friends 'gainst this impostor; lead them, Zaphna,
To root out a rapacious baneful crew,
Whose zeal is frenzy, whose religion, murder!
Zaph. Swift, swift, ye hours, and light me to revenge!
Come, thou infernal weapon,
[*Snatches the bloody sword.*
I'll wash off thy foul stain with the heart's blood
Of that malignant sanctified assassin!
[*As* ZAPHNA *is going off,*

Enter MIRVAN *and his Followers, who stop him.*

Mir. Seize Zaphna!
Help you the good Alcanor—Hapless man!
Our prophet, in a vision, learnt to-night,
The mournful tale of thy untimely end,
And sent me straight to seize the vile assassin,
That he might wreak severest justice on him:
Mahomet comes to vindicate the laws,
Not suffer with impunity their breach.

Alc. Heavens! what accumulated crimes are here!

Zaph. Where is the monster? bear me instant to him,
That I may blast him with my eye!—may curse him
With my last hesitating voice!

Palm. Thou traitor!
Did not thy own death-doing tongue enjoin
This horrid deed?

Mir. Off with him, [*To the* SOLDIERS.
And see him well secured!

Palm. Let me go with him; I will share thy fate,
Unhappy Zaphna, for I share thy guilt!

Mir. No more—you must to Mahomet:
Our great prophet
Will take you under his divine protection.

Palm. [*Apart.*] Oh, death! deliver me from such protection!

Mir. Away! [*To the Soldiers who hold* ZAPHNA.
You, this way. [*To* PALMIRA.

Zaph. Pardon!

Palm. Oh, pardon!

[*They are led off by degrees, looking alternately at their father, and each other.*

Alc. Oh, insupportable!
Both from me torn, then when I wanted most
Their consolation! [*A shout.*

Phar. Hark!

The citizens are roused, and all in arms
Rush on to your defence.
Alc. Pharon, support me
Some moments longer—Help—conduct me tow'rds them;
Bare this wound to them; let that speak the cause—
The treach'rous cause, for words begin to fail me;
Then, if in death I can but serve my country,
Save my poor children from this tiger's gripe!
What patriot, or parent, but would wish,
In so divine a cause, to fall a martyr! [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

Enter MAHOMET *and* MIRVAN.

Mah. Wrong will be ever nursed and fed with blood—
So this boy bigot held his pious purpose?
Mir. Devoutly.
Mah. What a reasonless machine
Can superstition make the reas'ner, man!
Alcanor lies there, on his bed of earth?
Mir. This moment he expired; and Mecca's youth
In vain lament their chief.
The silent and desponding crowd,
Broke out in murmurs, plaints, and last, in shouts,
And each mechanic grew a Mussulman.
Mah. But, say, is not our army at their gates?

Mir. Omar commands
Their nightly march, through unsuspected paths,
And with the morn appears.
Mah. At sight of them,
The weak remaining billows of this storm
Will lash themselves to peace—But where is Zaphna?
Mir. Safe in a dungeon, where he dies apace,
Unconscious of his fate; for, well thou know'st,
Ere at the altar's foot he slew his sire,
In his own veins he bore his guilt's reward,
A deadly draught of poison.
Mah. I would be kind, and let him die deceived,
Nor know, that parent blood defiles his soul.
Mir. He cannot know it: if the grave be silent,
I'm sure, Hercides is——
Mah. Unhappy Zaphna!
Something like pity checks me for thy death.
My safety claim'd his life,
And all the heaven of fair Palmira's charms
Shall be my great reward.
Mir. My noble lord,
Palmira is at hand, and waits your pleasure.
Mah. At hand! How, Mirvan, could'st thou let me talk
On themes of guilt, when that pure angel's near?
Mir. The weeping fair, led on by flatt'ring hope
Of Zaphna's life, attends your sacred will:
A silent, pale dejection shrowds her cheeks,
And, like the lily in a morning show'r,
She droops her head, and locks up all her sweets.
Mah. Say Mahomet awaits, and then
Assemble all our chiefs, and on this platform
Let them attend me straight. [*Exit* MIRVAN.

Enter PALMIRA.

Palm. [*Apart.*] Where have they led me?
Methinks, each step I take, the mangled corpse
Of my dear father, by poor Zaphna mangled,

Lies in my way, and all I see is blood. [*Starting.*
'Tis the impostor's self!—Burst, heart, in silence!
Mah. Maid, lay aside this dread. Palmira's fate,
And that of Mecca, by my will is fix'd.
This great event, that fills thy soul with horror,
Is mystery to all, but Heaven and Mahomet.
Palm. Oh, ever righteous Heaven, canst thou suffer
This sacrilegious hypocrite, this spoiler,
To steal thy terrors, and blaspheme thy name,
Nor doom him instant dead? [*Aside.*
Mah. Child of my care,
At length, from galling chains I've set thee free,
And made thee triumph in a just revenge;
Think, then, thou'rt dear to me, and Mahomet
Regards thee with a more than father's eye;
Then know, if thou'lt deserve the mighty boon,
A higher name, a nobler fate awaits thee.
Palm. What would the tyrant?
Mah. Raise thy thoughts to glory,
And sweep this Zaphna from thy memory,
With all that's past—Let that mean flame expire
Before the blaze of empire's radiant sun.
Thy grateful heart must answer to my bounties,
Follow my laws, and share in all my conquests.
Palm. What laws, what bounties, and what conquests, tyrant?
Fraud is thy law, the tomb, thy only bounty,
Thy conquests, fatal as infected air,
Dispeopling half the globe!—See here, good Heaven!
The venerable prophet I revered,
The king I served, the god that I adored!
Mah. [*Approaching her.*] Whence this unwonted language, this wild frenzy?
Palm. Where is the spirit of my martyr'd father?—
Where, Zaphna's—where, Palmira's innocence?
Blasted by thee—by thee, infernal monster!
Thou found'st us angels, and hast made us fiends!—

Give, give us back our lives, our fame, our virtue!
Thou canst not, tyrant!—yet thou seek'st my love—
Seek'st, with Alcanor's blood, his daughter's love!
Mah. [*Apart.*] Horror and death! the fatal secret's known!

Enter MIRVAN.

Mir. Oh, Mahomet! all's lost, thy glory tarnish'd,
And the insatiate tomb ripe to devour us!
Hercides' parting breath divulged the secret.
The prison's forced, the city all in arms:
See, where they bear aloft their murder'd chief,
Fell Zaphna in their front, death in his looks,
Rage all his strength. Spite of the deadly draught,
He holds in life, but to make sure of vengeance.
Mah. What dost thou here then? Instant with our guards,
Attempt to stem their progress, till the arrival
Of Omar, with the troops.
Mir. I haste, my lord. [*Exit.*
Palm. Now, now, my hour's at hand!
Hear'st thou those shouts, that rend the ambient air?
See'st thou those glancing fires, that add new horrors
To the night's gloom?—Fresh from thy murd'ring poniard,
My father's spirit leads the vengeful shades
Of all the wretches, whom thy sword has butcher'd!
Mah. [*Apart.*] What terror's this, that hangs upon her accents?
I feel her virtue, though I know her weakness.
Palm. Thou ask'st my love, go, seek it in the grave
Of good Alcanor—Talk'st of grateful minds?
Bid Zaphna plead for thee, and I may hear thee:
Till then, thou art my scorn—May'st thou, like me,
Behold thy dearest blood spilt at thy feet,
Mecca, Medina, all our Asian world,
Join, join to drive the impostor from the earth,
Blush at his chains, and shake them off in vengeance!

Mah. [*Apart.*] Be still, my soul, nor let a woman's rage
Ruffle thy wonted calm.—Spite of thy hate
Thou'rt lovely still, and charming, even in madness.
[*A shout, and noise of fighting.*
My fair, retire—nor let thy gentle soul
Shake with alarms; thou'rt my peculiar care:
I go, to quell this trait'rous insurrection,
And will attend thee straight.

Palm. No, tyrant, no!
I'll join my brother, help to head our friends,
And urge them on. [*A shout.*
Roll, roll your thunders, Heaven, and aid the storm!
Now, hurl your lightning on the guilty head,
And plead the cause of injured innocence! [*Exit.*

Enter ALI.

Mah. Whence, Ali, that surprise?

Ali. My royal chief,
The foe prevails—Thy troops, led on by Mirvan,
Are all cut off, and valiant Mirvan's self,
By Zaphna slain, lies welt'ring in his blood:
The guard, that to our arms should ope the gates,
Struck with the common frenzy, vow thy ruin,
And death and vengeance is the gen'ral cry.

Mah. Can Ali fear? Then, Mahomet, be thyself!

Ali. See, thy few friends, whom wild despair hath arm'd,
But arm'd in vain, are come to die beside thee.

Mah. Ye heartless traitors! Mahomet alone
Shall be his own defender, and your guard
Against the crowds of Mecca—Follow me!

Enter ZAPHNA, PALMIRA, *and* PHARON, *with* CITIZENS, *and the Body of* ALCANOR, *on a Bier.*

Ha!

Zaph. See, my friends, where the impostor stands,
With head erect, as if he knew not guilt;

As if no tongue spake from Alcanor's wound,
Nor call'd for vengeance on him!
Mah. Impious man!
Is't not enough to have spilt thy parent blood,
But, with atrocious and blaspheming lips,
Darest thou arraign the substitute of Heaven?
Zaph. The substitute of Heaven! so is the sword,
The pestilence, the famine—such art thou!
Such are the blessings Heaven has sent to man,
By thee, its delegate!
How could'st thou damn us thus?
Mah. Babbler, avaunt!
Zaph. Well thou upbraid'st me, for to parley with thee
Half brands me coward. Oh, revenge me, friends!
Revenge Alcanor's massacre! revenge
Palmira's wrongs, and crush the rancorous monster!
Mah. Hear me, ye slaves! born to obey my will—
Palm. Ah! hear him not—fraud dwells upon his tongue!
Zaph. Have at thee, fiend!—Ha! Heaven!
[ZAPHNA *advancing, reels, and reclines on his sword.*
What cloud is this,
That thwarts upon my sight? My head grows dizzy,
My joints unloose—sure, 'tis the stroke of fate!
Mah. [*Aside.*] The poison works—then triumph, Mahomet!
Zaph. Off, off, base lethargy!
Palm. Brother, dismay'd!
Hast thou no power but in a guilty cause,
And only strength to be a parricide?
Zaph. Spare that reproach—Come on—It will not be.
[*Hangs down his sword, and reclines on* PHARON.
Some cruel power unnerves my willing arm,
Blasts my resolves, and weighs me down to earth.
Mah. Such be the fate of all who brave our law!
Nature and death have heard my voice, and now

Let Heaven be judge 'twixt Zaphna and myself,
And instant blast the guilty of the two!
Palm. Brother!—Oh, Zaphna!
Zaph. Zaphna, now no more.
[*Sinking down by* ALCANOR'S *Body, and leaning on the Bier,* PHARON *kneeling down with him, and supporting him.*
Down, down, good Pharon—Thou, poor injured corse,
May I embrace thee? Won't thy pallid wound
Purple anew at the unnatural touch,
And ooze fresh calls for vengeance?
Palm. Oh, my brother!
Zaph. In vain's the guiltless meaning of my heart;
High Heaven detests th' involuntary crime,
And dooms for parricide—Then tremble, tyrant!
If the Supreme can punish error thus,
What new-invented tortures must await
Thy soul, grown leprous with such foul offences!
But soft—now fate and nature are at strife—
Sister, farewell! with transport should I quit
This toilsome, perilous, delusive stage,
But that I leave thee on't—leave thee, Palmyra,
Exposed to what is worse than fear can image—
That tyrant's mercy—Look on her, Heaven!
Guide her, and——Oh!—— [*Dies.*
Palm. Think not, ye men of Mecca,
This death inflicted by the hand of Heaven;
'Tis he—that viper——
Mah. Know, ye faithless wretches!
'Tis mine to deal the bolts of angry Heaven!
Behold them there, and let the wretch who doubts
Tremble at Zaphna's fate, and know, that Mahomet
Can read his thoughts, and doom him with a look.
Go then, and thank your pontiff, and your prince,
For each day's sun he grants you to behold.
Hence, to your temples, and appease my rage!
[*The People go off.*

Palm. Ah, stay! my brother's murder'd by this tyrant!
By poison, not by piety, he kills.
Mah. 'Tis done—Thus ever be our law received!
[*Apart.*
Now, fair Palmira——
Palm. Monster! is it thus
Thou makest thyself a god, by added crimes,
And murders, justify'd by sacrilege?
Mah. Think, exquisite Palmira, for thy sake——
Palm. Thou'st been the murderer of all my race.
See, where Alcanor, see, where Zaphna lies!
Do they not call for me too, at thy hands?
Oh, that they did!—But I can read thy thoughts;
Palmira's saved for something, worse than death;
This to prevent—Zaphna, I follow thee!
[*Stabs herself with* ZAPHNA'S *Sword.*
Mah. What hast thou done?
Palm. A deed of glory, tyrant!
Thou'st left no object worth Palmyra's eye,
And when I shut out light, I shut out thee. [*Dies.*
Mah. Farewell, dear victim of my boundless passion!
Oh, justice, justice!
In vain are glory, worship, and dominion!
All conq'ror as I am, I am a slave,
And, by the world adored, dwell with the damn'd!
My crimes have planted scorpions in my breast—
Here, here, I feel them! 'Tis in vain to brave
The host of terrors that invade my soul—
I might deceive the world, myself I cannot.
Ali. Be calm a while, my lord; think what you are.
Mah. Ha! what am I? [*Turning to the Bodies.*
Ye breathless family!
Let your loud-crying wounds say what I am!
Oh, snatch me from that sight! quick, quick, transport me
To nature's loneliest mansion, where the sun

Ne'er enter'd! where the sound of human tread
Was never heard—But wherefore? still, I there,
There still shall find myself—Ay, that's the hell!—
I'll none on't!—— [*Drawing his Sword.*

Ali. Heavens! help—hold him!

[ALI, *&c. disarm him.*

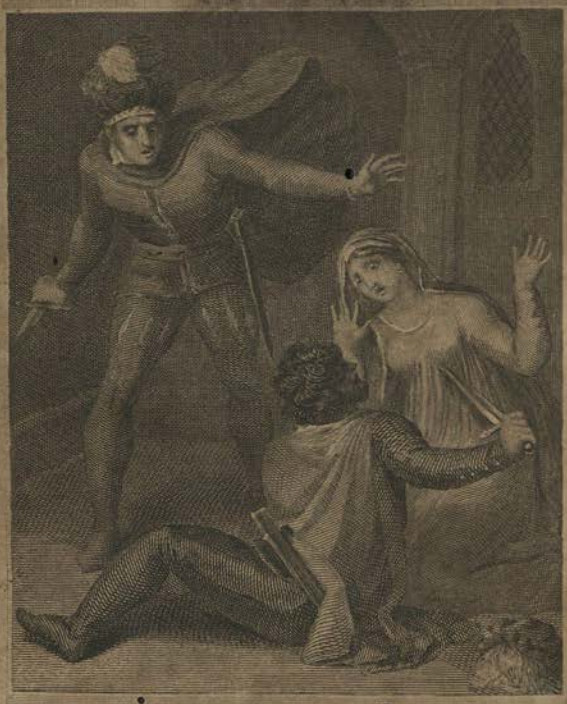
Mah. Paltry dastards!
You fled the foe, but can disarm your master.
Angel of death, whose power I've long proclaim'd,
Now aid me, if thou canst!—now, if thou canst,
Draw the kind curtain of eternal night,
And shrowd me from the horrors that beset me!

[*Exeunt* MAHOMET, *&c.*

Phar. Oh! what a curse is life, when self-conviction
Flings our offences hourly in our face,
And turns existence torturer to itself!
Here let the mad enthusiast turn his eyes,
And see, from bigotry, what horrors rise!
Here, in the blackest colours, let him read,
That zeal, by craft misled, may act a deed,
By which both innocence and virtue bleed.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END.



TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY JAMES THOMSON.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

COVENT GARDEN AND DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS,
FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

REMARKS.

THIS beautiful poèm in dialogue, called a drama, has but few attractions in representation, although it is the work of the celebrated author of "The Seasons."

Thomson was born in 1700, in Roxburgh, a shire in Scotland, the son of the minister of the parish of Ednam. He received his early education at Jedburgh, and was afterwards admitted to the university of Edinburgh. He was designed for the church, but the Muses presided over his inclination, and allured him from sacred study and his native land, to seek reputation, and other reward, in the capital of England.

His first pursuit was attained as soon as he published his "Winter,"—which appeared before the other Seasons—but more solid remuneration came both slowly and precariously, for, like most poets, Thomson was often in necessitous circumstances. Yet he was favoured with the friendship of Pope, and protected by the Lord Chancellor Talbot, with whose son he made the tour of Europe:—but, by the

death of that son, soon after his return, and the decease of the Chancellor immediately succeeding, the poet was reduced from a degree of affluence to poverty; as he merely held a lucrative place under his patron, which fell with him.

The present tragedy was first acted in 1744. Garrick was the original Tancred, and Mrs. Cibber the renowned Sigismunda.—The story is taken from "Gil Blas," and, as the author added little more than poetry to the fable, it is devoid of all that incident by which every act should be diversified, to establish the just title of a dramatic work.

The soft flowing love of Tancred and Sigismunda may find admirers by the fire-side, on a long winter's evening, but can with difficulty obtain listeners in a brilliant theatre, where a thousand objects divert the attention which is not seized at once by some bold occurrence on the stage, and fastened to the subject of its concern by perpetual variety.

The interest which the town has taken of late in seeing a child represent a man, has recalled this tragedy from the library once more to the theatre. But this is no proof against the dulness of the production. The taste which is irregular, will combine irregularities; and why should not exquisite verses be taken for a play, whilst an exquisite little boy is received as an actor?

Mrs. H. Siddons wants nothing to make the part of Sigismunda impressive, but a Tancred of her own height.

The author of this work died in the forty-ninth

year of his age, of a fever he caught by imprudently taking a boat from Hammersmith to Kew, when he was previously heated by a hasty walk from London He died at his house in Richmond, a pensioner of Frederick, Prince of Wales, the late king's father, and has a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Thomson appears, from all accounts received of him, to have been a man of mild and modest manners, and of depressed spirits. Dr. Johnson says he was fat, and accuses him of indolence—here is another irregularity—for Thomson was born on the other side of the Tweed.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	COVENT-GARDEN.	DRURY-LANE.
TANCRED	*Master Betty.*	*Master Betty.*
SIFFREDI	*Mr. Murray.*	*Mr. Powell.*
OSMOND	*Mr. Chapman.*	*Mr. Bartley.*
RODOLPHO	*Mr. Claremont.*	*Mr. Cooke.*
OFFICERS	*Mr. Bologna.* *Mr. Jeffries.* *Mr. Lewis.* *Mr. Sarjant.*	*Mr. Fisher.* *Mr. Male.* *Mr. Evans.*
SIGISMUNDA	*Miss Smith.*	*Mrs. H. Siddons.*
LAURA	*Mrs. Humphries.*	*Mrs. Scott.*

SCENE,—The City of Palermo, in Italy.

TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Sig. Ah, fatal day to Sicily! The King
Touches his last moments!
Laura. So 'tis fear'd.
Sig. Laura, 'tis said the heart is sometimes charged
With a prophetic sadness: such, methinks,
Now hangs on mine. The King's approaching death
Suggests a thousand fears. What troubles thence
May throw the state once more into confusion,
What sudden changes in my father's house
May rise and part me from my dearest Tancred,
Alarms my thoughts.
Laura. The fears of love-sick fancy
Perversely busy to torment itself.
But be assured your father's steady friendship,
Join'd to a certain genius, that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,
Here in the public eye of Sicily,

This, I may call him, his adopted son,
The noble Tancred, formed to all his virtues.
Sig. Ah, form'd to charm his daughter!.. This fair morn
Has tempted far the chase. Is he not yet
Return'd?
Laura. No.—When your father to the King,
Who now expiring lies, was call'd in haste,
He sent each way his messengers to find him;
With such a look of ardour and impatience,
As if this near event was to Count Tancred
Of more importance than I comprehend.
Sig. There lies, my Laura, o'er my Tancred's birth
A cloud I cannot pierce.
In Belmont woods, my father rear'd this youth—
Ah, woods! where first my artless bosom learn'd
The sighs of love.—He gives him out the son
Of an old friend, a baron of Apulia,
Who, in the late crusado, bravely fell.
But then 'tis strange; is all his family,
As well as father, dead?
What says Rodolpho? Does he truly credit
This story of his birth?
Laura. He has sometimes,
Like you, his doubts; yet, when maturely weighed,
Believes it true. As for Lord Tancred's self,
He never entertained the slightest thought
That verged to doubt; but oft laments his state,
By cruel fortune so ill pair'd to yours.
Sig. Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth.—Then, to your brother, Laura,
He talks of me?
Laura. Of nothing else. Howe'er
The talk begin, it ends with Sigismunda.
Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks,
Are full of you, and all the woods of Belmont
Enamoured with your name——

Sig. Away, my friend;
You flatter—yet the dear delusion charms.
Laura. No, Sigismunda, 'tis the strictest truth,
Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondness
My brother talks for ever of the passion
That fires young Tancred's breast. So much it strikes him,
He praises love as if he were a lover.
Heaven, he says,
In lavish bounty form'd the heart for love;
In love included all the finer seeds
Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss——
Sig. Virtuous Rodolpho!
Laura. Then his pleasing theme
He varies to the praises of your lover——
Sig. And what, my Laura, says he on that subject?
Laura. He says, that though he were not nobly born,
Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave.
Chiefly one charm
He in his graceful character observes;
That though his passions burn with high impatience,
And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,
Are ready to fly off, yet the least check
Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,
And gentle softness.
Sig. True, Oh, true, Rodolpho!
Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his!
He is all warmth, all amiable fire,
All quick heroic ardour!
Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praise him:
The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,
Is never flatter'd with such dear enchantment,
As when
She hears the praises of the man she loves!
Laura. Madam, your father comes.

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. [*To an* ATTENDANT.] Lord Tancred
Is found?
Attend. My lord, he quickly will be here.
Sif. 'Tis well—retire [*Exit* ATTENDANT.]—You
too, my daughter, leave me.
Sig. I go, my father—But how fares the King?
Sif. He is no more—Gone to that awful state,
Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.
Sig. How bright must then be his!—This stroke
is sudden;
He was this morning well, when to the chase
Lord Tancred went.
Sif. 'Tis true. But at his years,
Death gives short notice—Drooping nature then,
Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls.
His death, my daughter, was that happy period,
Which few attain. The duties of his day
Were all discharged:—Calm as the evening skies
Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open Heaven;—when, for his last long sleep
Timely prepared, a lassitude of life,
A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,
Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.
O, may my death be such!—He but one wish
Left unfulfill'd, which was, to see Count Tancred—
Sig. To see Count Tancred!——Pardon me, my
lord——
Sif. For what, my daughter?—But, with such
emotion,
Why did you start at mention of Count Tancred?
Sig. Nothing——I only hoped the dying King
Might mean to make some generous, just provision,
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.
Sif. And he has done it largely—Leave me now—
I want some private conference with Lord Tancred.
[*Exeunt* SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

My doubts are but too true—a mutual passion
Has seized, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
My sovereign now—Should it be so? Ah, there,
There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake
My long concerted scheme, to settle firm
The public peace and welfare, which the King
Has made the prudent basis of his will.—
Away, unworthy views! you shall not tempt me!
Nor interest, nor ambition shall seduce
My fix'd resolve——Perish the selfish thought,
Which our own good prefers to that of millions!
He comes, my King, unconscious of his fortune.

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. My Lord Siffredi, in your looks I read,
Confirmed, the mournful news that fly abroad
From tongue to tongue—We, then, at last, have lost
The good old King?

Sif. Yes, we have lost a father!
The greatest blessing Heaven bestows on mortals,
A good, a worthy king!

Tan. A general face of grief o'erspreads the city.
I mark'd the people, as I hither came,
In crowds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,
And pouring forth the noblest praise of tears.
A mingled murmur ran
Along the streets; and, from the lonely court
Of him who can no more assist their fortunes,
I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,
All hurrying to Constantia.

Sif. Noble youth!
I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,
Worthy of riper years.—But if they seek
Constantia, trust me, they mistake their course.

Tan. How! Is she not, my lord, the late King's sister,
Heir to the crown of Sicily, the last
Of our famed Norman line, and now our queen?

Sif. Tancred, 'tis true; she is the late King's sister,
The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant,
William the Bad—so for his vices styled;
Born some months
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.
Tan. You much surprise me—May I then presume
To ask who is?
Sif. Come nearer, noble Tancred,
Son of my care:—I must on this occasion
Consult thy generous heart; which, when conducted
By rectitude of mind, and honest virtues,
Gives better counsel than the hoary head.—
Then know, there lives a prince, here in Palermo,
The lineal offspring of our famous hero,
And rightful heir of Sicily.
Tan. Great Heaven!—How far removed
From that our mighty founder?
Sif. His great grandson:
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,
Before his father.
Tan. Ha! the prince you mean,
Is he not Manfred's son? The generous, brave,
Unhappy Manfred! whom the tyrant William,
You just now mention'd, not content to spoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamously murder'd?
Sif. Yes, the same.
Tan. But this prince,
Where has he lain conceal'd?
Sif. The late good King,
By noble pity moved, contrived to save him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage,
And had him rear'd in private, as became
His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,
By civil broils most miserably torn,
He in his safe retreat has lain conceal'd,
His birth and fortune to himself unknown;

But when the dying king to me entrusted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His successor he named him.

Tan. Happy youth!
He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty Osmond, and the tyrant's daughter.

Sif. Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of youth;
There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state.
I dread the horrors of rekindled war:
Though dead, the tyrant still is to be fear'd;
His daughter's party still is strong and numerous:
Her friend, Earl Osmond, Constable of Sicily,
Experienced, brave, high born, of mighty interest.
Better the prince and princess should by marriage
Unite their friends, their interest, and their claims;
Then will the peace and welfare of the land
On a firm basis rise.

Tan. My Lord Siffredi,
If by myself I of this prince may judge,
That scheme will scarce succeed.—Your prudent age
In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it—
But wherefore fear? The right is clearly his:
All Sicily will rouse, all faithful hearts
Will range themselves around Prince Manfred's son.
For me, I here devote me to the service
Of this young prince; I every drop of blood
Will lose with joy, with transport in his cause—
Then, find the prince;
Lose not a moment to awaken in him
The royal soul. Perhaps, he now desponding
Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune;
That in the narrower bounds of private life
He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues
Which from his noble father he inherits.

Sif. Perhaps regardless, in the common bane
Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.
But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,

I will awake a higher sense, a love
That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.
Tan. Why that surmise? Or should he love, Siffredi,
I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise
And animate his virtues—O, permit me
To plead the cause of youth—Their virtue oft,
In pleasure's soft enchantment lull'd a while,
Forgets itself; it sleeps and gaily dreams,
Till great occasion rouse it! then, all flame,
It walks abroad, with heightened soul and vigour,
And by the change astonishes the world.
Sif. Hear him, immortal shades of his great fathers!—
Forgive me, sir, this trial of your heart.
Thou! thou art he!
Tan. Siffredi!
Sif. Tancred, thou!
Thou art the man, of all the many thousands
That toil upon the bosom of this isle,
By Heaven elected to command the rest,
To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!
Tan. Manfred my father!—I the last support
Of the famed Norman line that awes the world!
I, who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,
Outcast of all but thee, my second father!
Thus called to glory;—to the first great lot
Of human kind!—
O, grant me, Heaven, the virtues to sustain
This awful burthen of so many heroes!
Let me not be exalted into shame,
Set up the worthless pageant of vain grandeur.
Mean time, I thank the justice of the king,
Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, Siffredi,
I thank thee!—O, I ne'er enough can thank thee!
Yes, thou hast been—thou art—shalt be my father!
Thou shalt direct my inexperienced years,
Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

Sif. It is enough for me—to see my sovereign
Assert his virtues, and maintain his honour.
Tan. I think, my lord, you said the king committed
To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd
With any base conditions, any clause,
To tyrannise my heart, and to Constantia
Enslave my hand devoted to another.
The hint you just now gave of that alliance,
You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
In this alone I will not bear dispute,
Not even from thee, Siffredi!—Let the council
Be straight assembled, and the will there opened:
Thence issue speedy orders to convene,
This day, ere noon, the senate; where those barons
Who now are in Palermo will attend,
To pay their ready homage to the king.
Sif. I go, my liege. But once again permit me
To tell you—Now, now is the trying crisis,
That must determine of your future reign.
O, with heroic rigour watch your heart!
And, to the sovereign duties of the king,
Th' unequalled pleasures of a god on earth,
Submit the common joys, the common passions,
Nay, even the virtues of the private man.
Tan. Of that no more. They not oppose, but aid,
Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.
[*Exit* SIFFREDI.
Now, generous Sigismunda, comes my turn
To show my love was not of thine unworthy,
When fortune bade me blush to look to thee.
But what is fortune to the wish of love?
A miserable bankrupt!
Quick, let me find her! taste that highest joy,
Th' exalted heart can know, the mix'd effusion
Of gratitude and love. Behold, she comes.

Enter SIGISMUNDA.

My fluttering soul was all on wing to find thee,
My love, my Sigismunda!
Sig. O, my Tancred!
Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom
That lowers around? I fear some dark event,
From the king's death, to trouble our repose,
That tender calm we in the woods of Belmont
So happily enjoy'd——Explain this hurry,
What means it? Say.
Tan. It means that we are happy!
Beyond our most romantic wishes, happy!
Sig. You but perplex me more.
Tan. It means, my fairest,
That thou art Queen of Sicily; and I
The happiest of mankind! than monarch more!
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant William's rage,
Was my father. [*Pausing.*
You droop, my love; dejected on a sudden;
You seem to mourn my fortune—The soft tear
Springs in thy eye—O, let me kiss it off——
Why this, my Sigismunda?
Sig. Royal Tancred,
None at your glorious fortune can like me
Rejoice;—yet, me alone, of all Sicilians,
It makes unhappy.
Tan. I should hate it then!
Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from me!—
No, Sigismunda, 'tis my hope with thee
To share it, whence it draws its richest value.
Sig. You are my sovereign—I at humble distance—
Tan. Thou art my queen! the sovereign of my soul!
Sig. Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought
Of changing with the vain external change

Of circumstance and fortune.
But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.
Some high-descended princess, who will bring
New power and interest to your throne, demands
Your royal hand—Perhaps Constantia——
Tan. She!
O, name her not! Were I this moment free,
And disengaged, as he who never sigh'd
For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor
All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father,
Most basely murder'd mine.—
And canst thou deem me then so poorly tame,
So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
As from the prudent cowardice of state
E'er to submit to such a base proposal?
They, whom just Heaven has to a throne exalted,
To guard the rights and liberties of others,
What duty binds them to betray their own?
For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates
But those of truth and honour; wear no chains,
But the dear chains of love, and Sigismunda!
Sig. Cease, cease to raise my hopes above my duty.
Charm me no more, my Tancred!—O, that we
In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,
Had pass'd our gentle days; far from the toil
And pomp of courts!
'Tis all in vain—you cannot hush a voice
That murmurs here—I must not be persuaded——
Tan. [*Kneeling.*] Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes!
And witness, Heaven, prime source of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world, combined against me,
Shall ever shake my faith to Sigismunda!
But now the public voice of duty calls me,
Which with unwearied zeal I will discharge;
And thou, yes, thou, shalt be my bright reward——
Yet, ere I go—to hush thy lovely fears,

Thy delicate objections [*Writes his name*]—take this blank,
Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father:
Tell him, 'tis my command, it be filled up
With a most strict and solemn marriage contract.
How dear each tie! how charming to my soul!
That more unites me to my Sigismunda.
For thee, and for my people's good to live,
Is all the bliss which sovereign power can give.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Grand Saloon.

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. So far 'tis well.—The late king's will proceeds
Upon the plan I counsell'd;—That Prince Tancred
Shall make Constantia partner of his throne.
But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which love has thrown betwixt?—My daughter owns
Her passion for the king—she trembling own'd it,
With prayers, and tears, and tender supplications,
That almost shook my firmness—And this blank,
Which his rash fondness gave her, shows how much,
To what a wild extravagance he loves.——
On a few moments hangs the public fate—
On a few hasty moments——Ha! there shone
A gleam of hope——Yes, with this very paper

I yet will save him—Necessary means,
For good and noble ends, can ne'er be wrong.
In that resistless, that peculiar case,
Deceit is truth and virtue—But how hold
This lion in the toil?—O, I will form it
Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong
With all the ties of honour and of duty,
That his most desperate fury shall not break
The honest snare.
To me, I know 'tis ruin;
But safety to the public, to the king.
I will not reason more—No—'tis fixed!
I here devote me for my prince and country;
Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish!
Behold, Earl Osmond comes, without whose aid
My schemes are all in vain.

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. My Lord Siffredi,
The princess to thy will submits her claims.
She with her presence means to grace the senate,
And of your royal charge, young Tancred's hand,
Accept.—Methought, besides,
I could discern, that not from prudence merely
She to this choice submitted.

Sif. Noble Osmond,
You have in this done to the public great
And signal service. Yes, I must avow it;
This frank and ready instance of your zeal,
In such a trying crisis of the state,
Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.

Osm. Siffredi, no. To you belongs the praise;
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thousands,
That by the barbarous sword of civil war
Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives.
I blush to think
I have so long opposed the best good man
In Sicily.—

To yours I join my hand; with you will own
No interest, and no party, but my country.
Nor is your friendship only my ambition:
There is a dearer name, the name of father,
By which I should rejoice to call Siffredi.
Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
Unite my private happiness.

Sif. My lord,
You have my glad consent. To be allied
To your distinguish'd family and merit,
I shall esteem an honour. From my soul,
I here embrace Earl Osmond as my friend
And son.

Osm. You make him happy.
I from this moment vow myself the friend
And zealous servant of Siffredi's house.

Enter an OFFICER.

Off. [*To* SIFFREDI.] The king, my lord, demands your speedy presence.

Sif. I will attend him straight.—Farewell, my lord;
The senate meets; there, a few moments hence,
I will rejoin you.

Osm. There, my noble lord,
We will complete this salutary work;
Will there begin a new auspicious era.

[*Exeunt* SIFFREDI *and* OFFICER.

Siffredi gives his daughter to my wishes;—
But does she give herself? Gay, young, and flattered,
Perhaps engaged.
I am not form'd, by flattery and praise,
By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade
Of love, to feed a fair one's vanity;
To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts
Nor suit my years nor temper: these be left
To boys, and doting age. A prudent father,
By nature charged to guide and rule her choice,

Resigns his daughter to a husband's power,
Who, with superior dignity, with reason,
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant. [*Exit.*

Enter RODOLPHO *from the Senate.*

Rod. This will perplexes all. No, Tancred never
Can stoop to these conditions, which at once
Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.
When he heard
Th' unjust, the base conditions of the will,
Uncertain, toss'd in cruel agitation,
He oft, methought, address'd himself to speak,
And interrupt Siffredi; who appear'd
With conscious haste to dread that interruption,
And hurry'd on——But, hark! I hear a noise,
As if th' assembly rose.

Enter LAURA.

Laura. Your high-praised friend, the king,
Is false, most vilely false. The meanest slave
Had shown a nobler heart.
He Manfred's son! away! it cannot be!
The son of that brave prince could never sacrifice
All faith, all honour, gratitude and love.
And, for what? why, truly,
For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit
On his own throne, with tyrant William's daughter!
Rod. I stand amazed—You surely wrong him, Laura.
There must be some mistake.
Laura. There can be none!
Siffredi read his full and free consent
Before the applauding senate. True, indeed,
A small remain of shame made him blush

To act this scene in Sigismunda's eye,
Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.
Hence, till to-morrow, he adjourn'd the senate;
To-morrow, fixed with infamy to crown him!
Then, leading off his gay, triumphant princess,
He left the poor, unhappy Sigismunda,
To bend her trembling steps to that sad home
His faithless vows will render hateful to her——
He comes!—Farewell—I cannot bear his presence!
[*Exit* LAURA.

Enter TANCRED *and* SIFFREDI.

Tan. Avoid me, hoary traitor!—Go, Rodolpho,
Give orders that all passages this way
Be shut—Defend me from a hateful world,
The bane of peace and honour—then return—
[*Exit* RODOLPHO.
What! dost thou haunt me still? O, monstrous insult!
Unparallel'd indignity! Just Heaven!
Was ever king, was ever man so treated;
So trampled into baseness?
Sif. Here, my liege,
Here strike! I nor deserve, nor ask for, mercy.
Tan. All, all but this, I could have borne—but this!
This daring insolence, beyond example!
This murderous stroke, that stabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human heart
Most exquisitely feels——
Sif. O, bear it not,
My royal lord; appease on me your vengeance!
Tan. Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel!
The lowest slave that crawls upon the earth,
Robb'd of each comfort Heaven bestows on mortals,
On the bare ground, has still his virtue left,
The sacred treasure of an honest heart,

Which thou hast dared, with rash, audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate——
Sif. Behold, my lord, that rash, audacious hand,
Which not repents its crime——Oh, glorious, happy!
If by my ruin I can save your honour.
Tan. Such honour I renounce; with sovereign scorn
Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser!
Hast thou not dared beneath my name to shelter—
Hast thou not,
Beneath thy sovereign's name, basely presumed
To shield a lie—a lie, in public utter'd,
To all deluded Sicily? But know,
This poor contrivance is as weak as base.
What! marry her! Constantia! her! the daughter
Of the fell tyrant who destroy'd my father!
The very thought is madness! Ere thou seest
The torch of Hymen light these hated nuptials,
Thou shalt behold Sicilia wrapt in flames,
Her cities razed, her valleys drench'd with slaughter——
Love set aside, my pride assumes the quarrel;
My honour now is up; in spite of thee,
A world combined against me, I will give
This scattered will in fragments to the winds,
Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,
And heap perdition on thee!
Sif. Sir, 'tis just.
Exhaust on me thy rage; I claim it all.
But for these public threats thy passion utters,
'Tis what thou canst not do.
Tan. I cannot! ha!
What shall arrest my vengeance? Who?
Sif. Thyself.
Tan. Away! dare not to justify thy crime!
That, that alone can aggravate its horror,
Add insolence to insolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget——

Sif. Oh, let it burst
On this grey head, devoted to thy service!
But when the storm has vented all its fury,
Thou then must hear—nay more, I know thou wilt—
Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason;
Thou must reflect that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour.——
Yes, thou must,
In calmer hours divest thee of thy love,
These common passions of the vulgar breast,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king,
The lover of thy people!

Tan. Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave;
In this will be a king; in this my people
Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
When they behold me vindicate my own.
But have I, say, been treated like a king?——
Heavens! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,
I were a mean, a shameless wretch, unworthy
To wield a sceptre in a land of slaves,
A soil abhorr'd of virtue; should belie
My father's blood, belie those very maxims,
At other times, you taught my youth——Siffredi!
[*In a softened tone of voice.*

Sif. Behold, my prince, thy poor old servant,
Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been
To nurse thee up to virtue; behold him here,
Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
With tears to beg thee to control thy passion,
To save thyself, thy honour, and thy people!
Turn not away——Oh, is there not some part
In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness,
And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel
The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice
Of Heaven and earth?

Tan. There is, and thou hast touched it.
Rise, rise, Siffredi——Oh, thou hast undone me!
Unkind old man!——Oh, ill-entreated Tancred!

Which way soe'er I turn, dishonour rears
Her hideous front—and misery and ruin.
Why have you raised this miserable conflict
Betwixt the duties of the king and man?
Set virtue against virtue?——But hold, my soul,
Thy steady purpose——Toss'd by various passions,
To this eternal anchor keep——There is,
Can be, no public without private virtue——
Then, mark me well, observe what I command;
To-morrow, when the senate meets again,
Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit.—
Start not, my lord—This must and shall be done!
Or here our friendship ends—Howe'er disguised,
Whatever thy pretence, thou 'art a traitor.

Sif. I should indeed deserve the name of traitor,
And even a traitor's fate, had I so slightly,
From principles so weak, done what I did,
As e'er to disavow it——

Tan. Ha!

Sif. My liege,
Expect not this——Though practised long in courts,
I have not so far learn'd their subtle trade,
To veer obedient with each gust of passion.
I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,
But honour more my duty.

Tan. You will not then?

Sif. I cannot.

Tan. Away! begone!——Oh, my Rodolpho, come,
And save me from this traitor!—Hence, I say.
No reply! away! [*Exit* SIFFREDI.

Enter RODOLPHO.

Rod. What can incense my prince so highly
Against his friend Siffredi?

Tan. Friend! Rodolpho?
When I have told thee what this friend has done,
How play'd me like a boy, a base-born wretch,

Who had no heart, nor spirit, thou wilt stand
Amazed, and wonder at my patience.
But this, my friend, this black, unheard-of outrage,
I cannot now impart——Till Sigismunda
Be disabused, my breast is tumult all.
Come, then, my friend, and by the hand of Laura,
Oh, let me steal a letter to her bosom,
And this evening
Secure an interview—I would not bear
This rack another day, not for my kingdom.
Thought drives on thought, on passions passions roll;
Her smiles alone can calm my raging soul. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Chamber.

SIGISMUNDA *alone, sitting in a disconsolate Posture.*

Sig. Ah, tyrant prince! ah, more than faithless Tancred!
Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falsehood!
Hadst thou this morning, when my hopeless heart,
Submissive to my fortune and my duty,
Ah! hadst thou then
Confess'd the sad necessity thy state
Imposed upon thee,
Since we must part at last, our parting soften'd;
I should indeed, I should have been unhappy,
But not to this extreme.—

Is there, kind Heaven, no constancy in man?
Even Tancred is inconstant! [*Rising.*
Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,
These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds me,
Are tainted with his vows—
My father comes—How, sunk in this disorder,
Shall I sustain his presence?

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. Sigismunda,
My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus
A prey to tears. I know the powerful cause
From which they flow, and therefore can excuse them,
But not their wilful obstinate continuance.
Come,
Awake to reason from this dream of love,
And show the world thou art Siffredi's daughter.
Sig. Alas! I am unworthy of that name.
Sif. Thou art indeed to blame; thou hast too rashly
Engaged thy heart, without a father's sanction.
But this I can forgive; and, if thy heart
Will now resume its pride, assert itself,
And greatly rise superior to this trial,
I to my warmest confidence again
Will take thee, and esteem thee more my daughter.
Sig. Oh, you are gentler far than I deserve!
It is, it ever was, my darling pride,
To bend my soul to your supreme commands,
Your wisest will; and though by love betrayed—
Alas! and punished too—yet I feel
A sentiment of tenderness, a source
Of filial nature springing in my breast,
That, should it kill me, shall control this passion,
And make me all submission and obedience
To you, my honour'd lord, the best of fathers.
Sif. Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age,
Come, let me take thee to a parent's heart;

There, with the dew of these paternal tears,
Revive and nourish this becoming spirit——
Then thou dost promise me, my Sigismunda,
Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,
And henceforth never more indulge one thought
That in the light of love regards the king?

Sig. Hopes I have none!—Those by this fatal day
Are blasted all—But from my soul to banish,
While weeping memory there retains her seat,
Thoughts which the purest bosom might have cherish'd,
Once my delight, now even in anguish charming,
Is more, alas! my lord, than I can promise.

Sif. Absence, and time, the softener of our passions,
Will conquer this. Mean time, I hope from thee
A generous great effort.
Rouse thee, for shame!
Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson,
This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.

Sig. Ah, that was not from virtue!—Had, my father,
That been his aim, I yield to what you say.
Why did you drag me to a sight so cruel?

Sif. It was a scene to fire thy emulation.

Sig. It was a scene of perfidy!—but know,
I will do more than imitate the king—
For he is false!—I, though sincerely pierced
With the best, truest passion, ever touch'd
A virgin's breast, here vow to Heaven and you,
Though from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
To cast this prince—What would you more, my father!

Sif. Yes, one thing more—thy father then is happy—
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
Demands one step; a step, by which convinced,
The king may see thy heart disdains to wear
A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.

But above all, thou must root out for ever
From the king's breast the least remain of hope,
And henceforth make his mentioned love dishonour.
These things, my daughter, that must needs be done,
Can but this way be done—by the safe refuge,
The sacred shelter of a husband——
And there is one——

Sig. Good Heavens! what means my lord?

Sif. One of illustrious family, high rank,
Yet still of higher dignity and merit,
Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
The king himself—Nay, hear me, Sigismunda—
The noble Osmond courts thee for his bride,
And has my plighted word—This day—

Sig. [*Kneeling.*] My father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees.
Oh, if you ever wish to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
When as I prattling twined around your neck,
You snatched me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
And melting said you saw my mother there;
Oh, save me from that worst severity
Of fate! Oh, outrage not my breaking heart
To that degree!—I cannot!—'tis impossible!——
So soon withdraw it, give it to another—

Sif. My daughter! you abuse
The softness of my nature—

Sig. Here, my father,
Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!

Sif. Rise, Sigismunda.—Though you touch my heart,
Nothing can shake th' inexorable dictates
Of honour, duty, and determined reason.
Then by the holy ties of filial love,
Resolve, I charge thee, to receive Earl Osmond,
As suits the man who is thy father's choice,
And worthy of thy hand—I go to bring him—

Sig. Spare me, my dearest father!

Sif. [*Aside.*] I must rush
From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me!
Sig. You cannot, oh, my father!
You cannot leave me thus!
Sif. Come hither, Laura,
Come to thy friend. Now show thyself a friend.
Combat her weakness; dissipate her tears;
Cherish, and reconcile her to her duty.
[*Exit* SIFFREDI.

Enter LAURA.

Laura. Forgive me, madam, if I blame your grief.
How can you waste your tears on one so false?
Unworthy of your tenderness; to whom
Nought but contempt is due, and indignation?
Sig. You know not half the horrors of my fate!
I might perhaps have learn'd to scorn his falsehood;
I might have roused my pride and scorn'd himself—
But 'tis too much, this greatest, last misfortune—
Oh, whither shall I fly? Where hide me, Laura,
From the dire scene my father now prepares?
Laura. What thus alarms you, madam?
Sig. Can it be?
Can I——ah, no!——at once give to another
My violated heart?
Oh, dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond.
Laura. Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outraged heart
Like yours, should wish!——I should, by Heavens, esteem it
Most exquisite revenge!
Sig. Revenge! on whom?
On my own heart, already but too wretched!
Laura. On him! this Tancred! who has basely sold,
For the dull form of despicable grandeur,
His faith, his love!—At once a slave and tyrant!

Sig. Oh, rail at me, at my believing folly,
My vain ill-founded hopes! but spare him, Laura.
Laura. Who raised these hopes? who triumphs o'er that weakness?
Pardon the word—You greatly merit him;
Better than him, with all his giddy pomp;
You raised him by your smiles, when he was nothing.
Where is your woman's pride, that guardian spirit
Given us to dash the perfidy of man?
Ye powers! I cannot bear the thought with patience—
Before the public thus, before your father,
By an irrevocable solemn deed,
With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him:
To give his faithless hand, yet warm from thine,
With complicated meanness, to Constantia.
And, to complete his crime, when thy weak limbs
Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,
To lead her off.
Sig. That was indeed a sight
To poison love, to turn it into rage
And keen contempt.—What means this stupid weakness
That hangs upon me? Hence, unworthy tears,
Disgrace my cheek no more! No more, my heart,
For one so coolly false or meanly fickle,
Dare to suggest
The least excuse!—Yes, traitor, I will wring
Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion!
Sicilia's daughters
Shall wondering see in me a great example
Of one, who punish'd an ill-judging heart,
Who made it bow to what it most abhorred!
Crush'd it to misery! for having thus
So lightly listened to a worthless lover!
Laura. At last it mounts, the kindling pride of virtue;
Trust me, thy marriage shall embitter his—

Will sting his soul to madness. Noble Osmond,
Of strictest honour, and by all revered——
Sig. Talk not of Osmond, but perfidious Tancred!
Rail at him, rail! invent new names of scorn!
Assist me, Laura;
Support my staggering purpose, which already
Begins to fail me——
Laura. If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
Thy resolution fix'd, yet, Sigismunda,
Oh, think how deeply, how beyond retreat,
Thy father is engaged.
Sig. Ah, wretched weakness!
It must not be!—thou first of angels! come,
Sweet filial piety, and firm my breast!
Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit;
Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!——
Laura!—they come!—Oh, Heavens, I cannot stand
The horrid trial!—Open, open, earth!
And hide me from their view.

Enter SIFFREDI *and* OSMOND.

Sif. My daughter,
Behold my noble friend, who courts thy hand,
And whom to call my son I shall be proud.
Osm. Think not I presume,
Madam, on this your father's kind consent,
To make me blest. I love you from a heart,
That seeks your good superior to my own;
And will by every art of tender friendship
Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,
Yours does not disavow your father's choice?
Sig. I am a daughter, sir—and have no power
O'er my own heart—Support me, Laura. [*Faints.*
Sif. Help—bear her off—She breathes—my daughter!
Sig. Oh,
Forgive my weakness—soft—my Laura, lead me
To my apartment. [*Exeunt* SIGIS. *and* LAURA.

Sif. Pardon me, my lord,
If, by this sudden accident alarm'd,
I leave you for a moment. [*Exit* SIFFREDI.
Osm. Let me think——
What can this mean?——Is it to me aversion?
Or is it, as I fear'd, she loves another?
Ha!—yes—perhaps the king—the young Count Tancred;
They were bred up together——Surely that,
That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,
In the most solemn manner, to Constantia?
Does not his crown depend upon the deed?
What is it then?—I care not what it be.
She must be mine.—She is!—If yet her heart
Consents not to my happiness, her duty,
Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much
Upon her generous nature—That will follow.
The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,
Nor flatt'ring steals, but forms himself the heart.
[*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Garden belonging to SIFFREDI

Enter SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Sig. [*With a Letter in her Hand.*] 'Tis done!—I am a slave!—The fatal vow
Has pass'd my lips!
But here is still new matter of distress.

O, Tancred, cease to persecute me more!
O, grudge me not some calmer state of woe!
Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,
Where I may never hear of love and thee!——
Has Laura too conspired against my peace?
Why did you take this letter?—Bear it back——
I will not court new pain. [*Giving her the Letter.*
Laura. Madam, Rodolpho
Urged me so much, nay, even with tears conjured me,
But this once more to serve th' unhappy king——
For such he said he was—that though enraged,
Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,
I could not to my brother's fervent prayers
Refuse this office.——Read it—his excuses
Will only more expose his falsehood.
Sig. No;—
It suits not Osmond's wife to read one line
From that contagious hand—she knows too well!
Laura. He paints him out distressed beyond expression,
Even on the point of madness.
He dies to see you, and to clear his faith.
Sig. Save me from that!—That would be worse than all!
Laura. I but report my brother's words; who then
Began to talk of some dark imposition,
That had deceived us all: when, interrupted,
We heard your father and Earl Osmond near,
As summon'd to Constantia's court they went.
Sig. Ha! imposition!——Well, if I am doom'd
To be, o'er all my sex, the wretch of love,
In vain I would resist.——Give me the letter—
To know the worst is some relief—Alas,
It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,
That, Tancred, once, I used to read thy letters!
[*Attempting to read the Letter, but gives it to* LAURA.
Ah, fond remembrance blinds me!—Read it, Laura.

Laura. [*Reads.*] *Deliver me, Sigismunda, from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment, till I see you, stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of*

TANCRED.

Sig. There, Laura! there the dreadful secret sprung!
That paper! ah, that paper! it suggests
A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father
Gave it; and he, perhaps—I dare not cast
A look that way!—If yet indeed you love me——.
Laura. Madam,
Behold he comes—the king!
Sig. Heavens! how escape?
No—I will stay.—This one last meeting—Leave me.
[*Exit* LAURA.

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. And are these long, long hours of torture past?
My life! My Sigismunda!
[*Throwing himself at her feet.*
Sig. Rise, my lord.
To see my sovereign thus, no more becomes me.
Tan. O, let me kiss the ground on which you tread!—
Let me exhale my soul in softest transport!

Since I again behold my Sigismunda! [*Rising.*
Unkind! how could'st thou ever deem me false?
How thus dishonour love? after the vows,
The fervent truth, the tender protestations,
Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breast,
Whate'er th' appearance was, admit suspicion?
Sig. How! when I heard, myself, your full consent
To the late king's so just and prudent will?
Heard it before you read, in solemn senate?
When I beheld you give your royal hand
To her, whose birth and dignity of right
Demands that high alliance? Yes, my lord,
You have done well. The man whom Heaven appoints
To govern others, should himself first learn
To bend his passions to the sway of reason.
In all, you have done well;—but when you bade
My humble hopes look up to you again,
And sooth'd with wanton cruelty my weakness—
That too was well—my vanity deserved
The sharp rebuke.
Tan. Chide on, chide on. Thy soft reproaches now,
Instead of wounding, only sooth my fondness.
No, no, thou charming consort of my soul!
I never loved thee with such faithful ardour,
As in that cruel, miserable moment,
You thought me false!
It was thy barbarous father, Sigismunda,
Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,
Meant for th' assuring bond of nuptial love,
To ruin it for ever! he, he wrote
That forged consent you heard beneath my name.
Had he not been thy father——Ha! my love!
You tremble—you grow pale!—
Sig. O, leave me, Tancred!——
Tan. No!—Leave thee!—Never!—never, till you set

My heart at peace; till these dear lips again
Pronounce thee mine!—Without thee, I renounce
Myself, my friends, the world!—Here, on this hand—
Sig. My lord, forget that hand, which never now
Can be to thine united——
Tan. Sigismunda!
What dost thou mean?—Thy words, thy look, thy manners,
Seem to conceal some horrid secret—Heavens!——
No—that was wild—Distraction fires the thought!—
Sig. Inquire no more——I never can be thine.
Tan. What!—Who shall interpose? Who dares attempt
To brave the fury of an injured king?
Who, ere he sees thee ravish'd from his hopes,
Will wrap all blazing Sicily in flames!——
Sig. In vain your power, my lord—This fatal error,
Join'd to my father's unrelenting will,
Has placed an everlasting bar betwixt us——
I am——Earl Osmond's—wife——
Tan. Earl Osmond's wife!——
[*After a long pause, during which they look at one another with the highest agitation, and most tender distress.*
Heavens! did I hear thee right?—What! married? married!—
Lost to thy faithful Tancred?—lost for ever!
Could'st thou then doom me to such matchless woe,
Without so much as hearing me?—Distraction!——
Alas! what hast thou done?—Ah, Sigismunda!
Thy rash credulity has done a deed,
Which, of two happiest lovers that e'er felt
The blissful power, has made two finish'd wretches!
But—madness!—Sure thou know'st it cannot be?
This hand is mine!—a thousand thousand vows——

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. [*Snatching her hand from the king.*] Madam,
this hand, by the most solemn rites,
A little hour ago, was given to me;
And did not sovereign honour now command me,
Never but with my life to quit my claim,
I would renounce it——thus!

Tan. Ha, who art thou?

Sig. [*Aside.*] Where is my father? Heavens!
[*Goes out.*

Osm. One thou should'st better know.—Yes—view
me, one
Who can and will maintain his rights and honour
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king!
Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant
Would blush to act.

Tan. Insolent Osmond! know,
This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
Prior to thine!—thine, founded on compulsion,
On infamous deceit. I will annul,
By the high power with which the laws invest me,
Those guilty forms, in which you have entrapp'd
My queen betroth'd, who has my heart, my hand,
And shall partake my throne.—If, haughty lord,
If this thou didst not know, then know it now;
And know, besides, as I have told thee this,
Should'st thou but think to urge thy treason further,
Thy life shall answer for it.

Osm. Ha! my life!——
It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.
When was it that a Norman baron's life
Became so vile, as on the frown of kings
To hang?—Of that, my lord, the law must judge:
Or, if the law be weak, my guardian sword—

Tan. Dare not to touch it, traitor, lest my rage
Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

Enter SIFFREDI.

Sif. My gracious lord, what is it I behold!
My sovereign in contention with his subjects?
Heavens! can your highness
From your exalted character descend,
Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,
The sacred peace of families, for which
Alone the free-born race of man to laws
And government submitted?

Tan. My Lord Siffredi,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station
Are not to me unknown. But thou, old man,
Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded,
And of our best, our dearest, bliss disturb'd?
Thou, who with more than barbarous perfidy,
Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,
Humanity itself, beneath thy feet?
Thou know'st thou hast.—I could to thy confusion
Return thy hard reproaches; but I spare thee
Before this lord, for whose ill-sorted friendship
Thou hast most basely sacrificed thy daughter.
Farewell, my lord.—For thee, Lord Constable,
Who dost presume to lift thy surly eye
To my soft love, my gentle Sigismunda,
I once again command thee, on thy life——
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No further urge thy arrogant pretensions!

[*Exit* TANCRED.

Osm. Ha! arrogant pretensions! Heaven and earth!
What! arrogant pretensions to my wife?
My wedded wife!—Where are we? in a land
Of civil rule, of liberty, and laws?—
Not, on my life, pursue them!—Giddy prince!
My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift

Of parent Heaven, who gave me too an arm,
A spirit to defend it against tyrants.
Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,
Mix'd with my own, the rights of each Sicilian.
Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,
And crush thee in the ruins!—
Constantia is my queen!

Sif. Lord Constable,
Let us be stedfast in the right; but let us
Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
As well as manly firmness.
I know the king; at first, his passions burst
Quick as the lightning's flash, but in his breast
Honour and justice dwell.—Trust me, to reason
He will return.

Osm. He will!—By Heavens, he shall!—
You know the king—I wish, my Lord Siffredi,
That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew.—
And would you have me wait, with duteous patience,
Till he return to reason? Ye just powers!
When he has planted on our necks his foot,
And trod us into slaves; when his vain pride
Is cloy'd with our submission.
No, no, my lord! there is a nobler way
To teach the blind oppressive Fury reason:
Oft has the lustre of avenging steel
Unseal'd her stupid eyes.—The sword is reason!—

Enter RODOLPHO, *with* GUARDS.

Rod. My Lord High Constable of Sicily,
In the King's name, and by his special order,
I here arrest you prisoner of state.

Osm. What king? I know no King of Sicily,
Unless he be the husband of Constantia.

Rod. Then know him now——behold his royal orders,
To bear you to the castle of Palermo.

Sif. Let the big torrent foam its madness off.
Submit, my lord—No castle long can hold
Our wrongs.—This, more than friendship or alliance,
Confirms me thine; this binds me to thy fortunes,
By the strong tie of common injury,
Which nothing can dissolve.—I grieve, Rodolpho,
To see the reign in such unhappy sort
Begin.

Osm. The reign?—The usurpation, call it!
This meteor king may blaze a while, but soon
Must spend his idle terrors.—Sir, lead on——
Farewell, my lord—more than my life and fortune,
Remember well, is in your hands—my honour!

Sif. Our honour is the same. My son, farewell—
We shall not long be parted.—On these eyes
Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee
Restored to freedom, or partake thy bonds. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Chamber.

SIFFREDI, *alone.*

Sif. The prospect lowers around. I found the king
Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the risk,
To claim my daughter, and dissolve the marriage.—
I have embark'd, upon a perilous sea,
A mighty treasure; and I only faster rush

Upon the desperate evils I would shun.
Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,
And harsh unnatural force, are not the means
Of public welfare, or of private bliss.—
Bear witness, Heaven, thou mind-inspecting eye!
My breast is pure. I have preferr'd my duty,
The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,
To all those views that fire the selfish race
Of mortal men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an OFFICER *belonging to* SIFFREDI.

Off. My lord, a man of noble port, his face
Wrapp'd in disguise, is earnest for admission.
Sif. Go, bid him enter—— [*Exit* OFFICER.
Ha! wrapp'd in disguise!
And at this unseasonable hour!

Enter OSMOND, *discovering himself.*

What! ha!—Earl Osmond, you?—Welcome, once more,
To this glad roof!——
Would I could hope the king exceeds his promise!
I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
Shall gild Sicilia's cliffs, you shall be free.——
Has some good angel turn'd his heart to justice?
Osm. It is not by the favour of Count Tancred,
That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
As I defy his tyranny and threats——
Our friend Goffredo, who commands the castle,
On my parole, ere dawn to render back
My person, has permitted me this freedom.
Know, then, the faithless outrage of to-day,
By him committed whom you call the king,
Has roused Constantia's court. Our friends, the friends
Of virtue, justice, and of public faith,

Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
As guardian of this will, to you entrusted,
Desire, nay more, demand your instant aid,
To see it put in vigorous execution.
Sif. You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence;
But let us not precipitate the matter.
Constantia's friends are numerous and strong;
Yet Tancred's, trust me, are of equal force:
Oh, let us join,
My generous Osmond, to avert these woes,
And yet sustain our tottering Norman kingdom!
Osm. But how, Siffredi, how?——If by soft means
We can maintain our rights, and save our country,
May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,
Who with unpitying fury first shall draw it!
Sif. I have a thought—The glorious work be thine.
Suppose my daughter, to her God devoted,
Were placed within some convent's sacred verge,
Beneath the dread protection of the altar——
Osm. Ere then, by Heavens! I would
Turn whining monk myself,
And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety.——
What!—How! because an insolent invader,
A sacrilegious tyrant, demands my wife—
What! shall I tamely yield her up,
Even in the manner you propose?——Oh, then
I were supremely vile! degraded! shamed!
The scorn of manhood! and abhorr'd of honour!
Sif. There is, my lord, an honour, the calm child
Of reason, of humanity, and mercy.
Osm. My lord, my lord, I cannot brook your prudence;
It holds a pulse unequal to my blood——
Unblemish'd honour is the flower of virtue!
The vivifying soul! and he who slights it,
Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.

Sif. No more——You are too warm.
Osm. You are too cool.
Sif. I wish Earl Osmond were as cool as I
To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm
To that of others——But of this no more—
My daughter is thy wife——I gave her to thee,
And will, against all force, maintain her thine.
But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,
Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;
Or, till the last extremity compel me,
Risk the dire means of war——The king, to-morrow,
Will set you free; and, if by gentle means
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,
And wed Constantia, as the will requires,
Why then expect me on the side of justice——
Let that suffice.
Osm. It does—Forgive my heat!
My rankled mind, my injuries inflamed,
May be too prompt to take and give offence.
Sif. 'Tis past—Your wrongs, I own, may well transport
The wisest mind——But henceforth, noble Osmond,
Do me more justice, honour more my truth,
Nor mark me with an eye of squint suspicion.
These jars apart—You may repose your soul
On my firm faith, and unremitting friendship.
Return, my son, and from your friend Goffredo
Release your word. There try, by soft repose,
To calm your breast.
Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the skies,
I, with my friends, in solemn state assembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom:
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face
Of Sicily, my daughter shall be yours.
Farewell.
Osm. My lord, good night. [*Exit* SIFFREDI.
[*After a long pause.*] I like him not——

Yes—I have mighty matter of suspicion.
My honour is not safe, while here my wife
Remains——Who knows but he this very night
May bear her to some convent, as he mentioned——
The king too—though I smother'd up my rage,
I mark'd it well—will set me free to-morrow.
Why not to-night? He has some dark design——
By Heavens, he has!—I am abused most grossly;
Made the vile tool of this old statesman's schemes!
I will not wait his crawling timid motions;
I will convince him, that Earl Osmond never
Was form'd to be his dupe——
I will bear her off
This night, and lodge her in a place of safety:
I have a trusty band that waits not far.
Hence! let me lose no time—One rapid moment
Should ardent form, at once, and execute
A bold design—'Tis fix'd—'Tis done!
The mine is laid,
And only wants my kindling touch to spring.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

SIGISMUNDA'S *Apartment.* [*Thunder.*

Enter SIGISMUNDA *and* LAURA.

Laura. Heavens! 'tis a fearful night!
Sig. Ah! the black rage
Of midnight tempest, or th' assuring smiles
Of radiant morn, are equal all to me.
Leave me, my Laura.
Laura. Madam, indeed I know not how to go.
Indulge my fondness—Let me watch a while
By your sad bed, till these dread hours shall pass.
[*Thunder.*

Sig. Oh, that the fires
Of pitying Heaven would point their fury here!
Good night, my dearest Laura.
Laura. Oh, I know not
What this oppression means—But 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you——
Well then—Good night, my dearest Sigismunda.
[*Exit.*
Sig. I said I did not fear—Ah me, I feel
A shivering horror run through all my powers!
What shall I do?
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror?—
Here with the midnight shades, here will I sit,
[*Sitting down.*
A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep
The hours away—Bless me!—I heard a noise——
[*Starting up.*
No—I mistook—nothing but silence reigns,
And awful midnight round—Again!—Oh, Heavens!
My lord, the king!

Enter TANCRED.

Tan. Be not alarm'd, my love!
Sin. My royal lord, why at this midnight hour,
How came you hither?
Tan. By that secret way
My love contrived, when we, in happier days,
Used to devote these hours so much in vain,
To vows of love, and everlasting friendship.
Sig. Why will you thus persist to add new stings
To her distress, who never can be thine?
Oh, fly me! fly! you know——
Tan. I know too much.
Oh, how I could reproach thee, Sigismunda!
Pour out my injured soul in just complaints!
But now the time permits not, these swift moments—
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forced me to seem perfidious in thy eyes.

E'er since—a dreadful interval of care:—
My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,
How to defeat Siffredi's barbarous purpose.
But thy credulity has ruin'd all;
Thy rash, thy wild—I know not what to name it——
Oh, it has proved the giddy hopes of man
To be delusion all, and sick'ning folly!

Sig. Ah, generous Tancred! ah, thy truth destroys me!

Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am false!
Now is thy turn of vengeance—hate, renounce me!
At least, try to forget the worthless Sigismunda!

Tan. Forget thee! No! Thou art my soul itself!
I have no thought, no hope, no wish but thee!
Ah, how forget thee!—Much must be forgot,
Ere Tancred can forget his Sigismunda!

Sig. But you, my lord, must make that great effort—

Tan. Can Sigismunda make it?

Sig. Ah, I know not
With what success—But all that feeble woman
And love-entangled reason can perform,
I to the utmost will exert to do it.

Tan. Oh, barbarous Sigismunda!
And canst thou talk thus steadily! thus treat me
With such unpitying, unrelenting rigour?
Poor is the love that, rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity, can bear to see
The man, whose heart was once so dear to thine,
By many a tender vow so mix'd together,
A prey to anguish, fury, and distraction!
Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch;
Thou canst not, Sigismunda!—Yet relent.
Oh, save us yet!—Rodolpho, with my guards,
Waits in the garden—Let us seize the moments
We ne'er may have again—With more than power,
I will assert thee mine with fairest honour.

The world shall even approve; each honest bosom
Swell'd with a kindred joy to see us happy.
Sig. The world approve! what is the *world to me?*
The conscious mind is its own awful *world*——
And mine is fix'd.—Distress me, *then*, no more;
Not all the heart can plead (*and it*, alas,
Pleads but too much)
Shall ever shake th' unalterable dictates
That tyrannise my breast.
Tan. 'Tis well—No more—
I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes, inhuman!
Since thy barbarian heart is steel'd by pride,
Shut up to love and pity, here behold me
Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch!
Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties!
Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,
Here at thy feet—Death, death alone shall part us!
Sig. Have you then vow'd to drive me to perdition?
Oh, leave me! fly me! were it but in pity!—
Then rise, my lord; and if you truly love me,
If you respect my honour, nay, my peace,
Retire! for though the emotions of my heart
Can ne'er alarm my virtue; yet, alas!
They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish—
Oh, 'tis too much!—I cannot bear the conflict!

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. Turn, tyrant, turn! and answer to my honour,
For this thy base, insufferable outrage!
Tan. Insolent traitor! think not to escape
Thyself my vengeance! [*They fight*, OSMOND *falls.*
Sig. Help, here! help!—Oh, Heavens!
[*Throwing herself down by him.*
Alas, my lord, what meant your headlong rage?
That faith, which I this day, upon the altar,
To you devoted, is unblemish'd, pure

As vestal truth; was resolutely you—,
Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.
Osm. Perfidious woman! die!——[*Shortening his sword, he plunges it into her breast*]—and to the grave
Attend a husband, yet but half avenged!
Tan. Oh, horror! horror! execrable villain!
Osm. And, tyrant! thou!—thou shalt not o'er my tomb
Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great!—I die content!—
[*Dies.*

Enter RODOLPHO *and* ATTENDANTS.

Tan. [*Throwing himself down by* SIGISMUNDA.]
Quick! here! bring aid!—All in Palermo bring
Whose skill can save her!—Ah, that gentle bosom!
Pours fast the streams of life.
Sig. All aid is vain:
I feel the powerful hand of death upon me—
But, oh! it sheds a sweetness through my fate,
That I am thine again; and, without blame,
May in my Tancred's arms resign my soul!
Tan. Oh death is in that voice! so gently mild,
So sadly sweet, as mixes even with mine
The tears of hovering angels!—Mine again!——
And is it thus the cruel Fates have join'd us?
Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare
For love like ours?—
Yes, death shall soon unite us.
Sig. Live, live, my Tancred!—Let my death suffice
To expiate all that may have been amiss;
May it appease the Fates, avert their fury
From thy propitious reign!

Enter SIFFREDI.

My father!——Oh, how shall I lift my eyes
To thee, my sinking father!

Sif. Awful Heaven!
I am chastised——My dearest child!——
Sig. Where am I?
A fearful darkness closes all around—
Oh, my dear father, bow'd beneath the weight
Of age and grief—the victim even of virtue,
Receive my last adieu!—Where art thou, Tancred?
Give me thy hand—But ah! it cannot save me
From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power
Creeps o'er my heart——Oh!
Tan. How these pangs distract me!
Oh, lift thy gracious eyes:—Thou leavest me then!
Thou leavest me, Sigismunda!
Sig. Oh,——I die——
Eternal mercy take my trembling soul!
Oh, 'tis the only sting of death to part
From those we love—from thee—farewell, my Tancred! [*Dies.*
Tan. Thus, then!
[*Flying to his sword, is held by* RODOLPHO.
Rod. Hold! hold! my lord!—Have you forgot
Your Sigismunda's last request already?
Tan. Off! set me free! Think not to bind me down,
With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!
What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates
Which death still opens to the woes of mortals?—
Off, traitors, off! or my distracted soul
Will burst indignant from this gaol of nature,
To where she beckons yonder—No, mild seraph,
Point not to life——I cannot linger here,
Cut off from thee, the miserable pity,
The scorn of human kind!——A trampled king!
Oh, shame! Oh, agony! Oh, the fell stings
Of late, of vain repentance!——Ha, my brain
Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!
Th' infernal world discloses! See! Behold him!
Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,

And mocks my feeble tears.—Hence, quickly hence!
Spurn his vile carcass! give it to the dogs!
Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!
Ah! impotence of rage!

Rod. Preserve him, Heaven!

Tan. What am I? Where?
Sad, silent, all?—The forms of dumb despair,
Around some mournful tomb—What do I see?
This soft abode of innocence and love
Turn'd to the house of death! a place of horror!——
Ah, that poor corse! pale! pale! deform'd with murder!
Is that my Sigismunda? [*Throws himself down by her.*

THE END.

LONDON:

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SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND

CLARINDA — YOUR SERVANT COUSIN SACHEVERELL

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Drawn by C. Heath. Published by Longman & Clarke. Engraved by C. Mayer.

THE

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY DR. HOADLY.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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REMARKS.

WHOEVER reads this play, and, more especially, whoever sees it, will be astonished that it was the only drama the author ever wrote. It was too good a beginning to give an omen that it would be also the end of his theatrical career. But the author had other employment; and though his taste allured him to write for the stage, his prudence and wisdom directed him not to omit more serious, and, perhaps, more essential, occupation.

The learned prelate, Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester, had two sons, Benjamin and John. The eldest was a Doctor of Physic, and physician to the king; the youngest, a Doctor of Divinity, and chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales. They both became eminent in their professions; yet, though they each pursued with vigour their graver studies, they were both devoted to the fascinating charms of the drama.

Benjamin, the eldest, is the author of "The Suspicious Husband;" though it has been always supposed that he had the assistance of his brother in its composition.

The divine, even more than the physician, seems to have been enamoured of theatrical amusements; for he wrote many sacred and other plays, which

were found in manuscript, on his decease; he had, besides, an intimate acquaintance with Garrick, and took delight in having interludes and other stage productions acted at his country house, whenever he invited company.

It is said, that the great Hogarth, on a visit to Dr. John Hoadly, having undertaken to perform a part in one of those exhibitions, showed such deficiency in a retentive memory, that, with all his application, he could never learn one single speech by heart, so as to speak it perfectly. To atone for this dulness, he ornamented the playbills of the evening with characteristic figures, so excellent, they are still preserved, though not engraved, amongst other of the works of this celebrated artist.

The present comedy appeared in 1747, when Benjamin was forty-two, John, thirty-eight years of age, and the bishop, their father, still living. That venerable prelate appears to have laid no restriction upon his two sons' dramatic fervour: probably he had a conception, that theatric zeal might be less dangerous, both to themselves and the world, than polemical ardour. He found his own good books as liable to condemnation from the clergy, as the dramas of his children from the audience of a theatre; and whilst he was souring his temper, and the minds of those churchmen, whom, by his controversial sermons and pamphlets, he attacked, his two sons were employed in disposing half the town to brotherly love, by chasing away spleen, in the jocund attractions of this production.

This comedy was, from its very first performance, received with testimonies of high favour; nor has time reduced its credit with the public. Ranger is the pleasantest man of frolicsome propensity that was ever introduced upon the stage; because, though he has numerous faults, he has not one flagrant vice; and the rest of the characters are perfectly natural, though somewhat insipid: but their want of spirit is fully recompensed by the abundance which is bestowed upon Ranger; for in the glow of his fire, every character which surrounds him receives an animating warmth.

Strictland is supposed to have a superiority to most of the other parts, by being placed, all through the piece, under the influence of a tormenting passion—but of all the jealous husbands on the stage, from the ancient Kitely and Ford, down to the modern Sir John Restless, Strictland is the most tame and unimportant: nor has he, or his wife, any other claims upon the interest of their auditors, than what arise from their connexion with that support of the play—the volatile Ranger.

Next to Ranger himself, his hat is the most important individual of the comedy. Here incident makes characters, or at least makes the audience feel no want of them.

Those who doubt the justice of certain eulogiums passed on Garrick, in many parts he acted, still suppose he was very excellent in the part of Ranger; yet the comedy lives, though Garrick is no more.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
STRICTLAND	*Mr. Pope.*	*Mr. Cooke.*
RANGER	*Mr. Elliston.*	*Mr. Lewis.*
FRANKLY	*Mr. Penley.*	*Mr. Brunton.*
BELLAMY	*Mr. Barnard.*	*Mr. Claremont.*
JACK MEGGOT	*Mr. Russell.*	*Mr. Farley.*
TESTER	*Mr. Knight.*	*Mr. Simmons.*
SIMON		*Mr. Abbott.*
BUCKLE	*Mr. Purser.*	*Mr. Klanert.*
CHAIRMEN		*Mr. Wild.* *Mr. Field.*
SERVANTS		*Mr. Truman, &c.*
MRS. STRICTLAND	*Mrs. Orger.*	*Mrs. St. Leger.*
CLARINDA	*Mrs. Edwin.*	*Mrs. Glover.*
JACINTHA	*Mrs. Mardyn.*	*Mrs. Taylor.*
LUCETTA	*Miss Kelly.*	*Mrs. Mattocks.*
LANDLADY	*Mrs. Maddocks.*	*Mrs. Emery.*
MILLINER	*Mrs. Scott.*	*Miss Cox.*

SCENE.—London.

THE

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

RANGER'S *Chambers in the Temple.*

A knocking is heard at the Door for some time; when RANGER *enters, having let himself in.*

Ran. Once more I am got safe to the Temple. Let me reflect a little. I have sat up all night: I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damned tingling of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head; and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lies only in obscenity—their mirth in noise—and their delight in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for it, thou art a mighty silly fellow.

Enter SERVANT.

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the

key in my pocket, I must have waited at the door in this dainty dress!

Serv. I was only below, brushing your honour's coat.

Ran. Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compared to that spruce, sober gentleman! Go, you battered devil, and be made fit to be seen.

[*Throwing his wig to the* SERVANT.

Serv. 'Cod, my master's very merry this morning! [*Exit.*

Ran. And now for the law. [*Sits down and reads.*

Tell me no more I am deceived,
That Cloe's false and common!
By heav'n, I all along believed
She was a very woman.
As such I liked, as such caress'd;
She still was constant when possess'd:
She could do more for no man.

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart.—Have you been for the money this morning, as I ordered you?

Serv. No, sir. You bade me go before you was up; I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

Ran. None of your jokes, I pray; but to business. Go to the coffee-house, and inquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

Serv. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

Ran. [*Repeats.*]

"You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind:
I take her body, you her mind;
Which has the better bargain?"

Oh, that I had such a soft, deceitful fair, to lull my senses to their desired sleep. [*Knocking at the Door.*] Come in.

Enter SIMON.

Oh, master Simon, is it you? How long have you been in town?

Simon. Just come, sir, and but for a little time neither: and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round. Here they are, all of them. [*Pulls out a number of Cards.*] And, among them, one for your honour.

Ran. [Reads.] *Clarinda's compliments to her cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him for ever so little a time that he can be spared from the more weighty business of the law.*—Ha! ha! ha! the same merry girl I ever knew her.

Simon. My lady is never sad, sir.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Ran. Pr'ythee, Simon, open the door.

Enter MILLINER.

Well, child—and who are you?

Mil. Sir, my mistress gives her service to you, and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

Ran. Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her. I am a little busy, Simon—and so——

Simon. Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag—but mum for that. [*Exit* SIMON.

Ran. I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes—the loveliest pouting lips—I never saw you before.

Mil. No, sir! I was always in the shop.

Ran. Were you so? Well, and what does your mistress say?—The devil fetch me, child, you looked so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

Mil. Lard, sir, you are such another gentleman! Why, she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

Ran. No, child; give them to me—dear little smiling angel— [*Catches, and kisses her.*

Mil. I beg, sir, you would be civil.

Ran. Civil! Egad, I think I am very civil.

[*Kisses her again.*

Enter SERVANT *and* BELLAMY.

Ser. Sir, Mr. Bellamy.

Ran. Damn your impertinence!—Oh, Mr. Bellamy, your servant.

Mil. What shall I say to my mistress?

Serv. Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. [*Exit* MILLINER.] Pshaw! Pox! Mr. Bellamy, how should you like to be served so yourself?

Bel. How can you, Ranger, for a minute's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she felt?—There was a modest blush upon her cheek convinces me she is honest.

Ran. May be so. I was resolved to try, however.

Bel. Fie, Ranger! will you never think?

Ran. Yes, but I can't be always a-thinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr. Bellamy, and without something now and then to amuse and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye. But I am a mighty sober fellow grown. Here have I been at it these three hours; but the wenches will never let me alone.

Bel. Three hours! Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

Ran. Rat your inquisitive eyes! *Ex pede Herculem.* Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment returned from the tavern. What, Frankly here too?

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. My boy, Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you; Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the

person I want: I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

Ran. It is to him, then, I am obliged for this visit; but, with all my heart. He is the only man to whom I don't care how much I am obliged.

Bel. Your humble servant, sir.

Frank. You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But—you look sadly:—What—no merciless jade has——has she?

Ran. No, no; sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

Bel. Thus, Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head aches; at noon he begins to clear up; towards evening he is good company; and all night he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

Ran. Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did relapse a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

Frank. And he is now doing penance for it. Were you his confessor, indeed, you could not well desire more.

Ran. Charles, he sets up for a confessor with the worst grace in the world. Here he has been reproving me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms, every body else must be so too!

Bel. I am no less sensible of their charms than you are; though I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or fall in love, as you call it, with every face which has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasures.

Frank. My dear friend, this is very pretty talking! But, let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

Bel. It must be from a fine woman, then; and not such as are generally reputed so. And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her, too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

Ran. 'Would I could see it once! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessaries, it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all out upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

Bel. Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love, and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good nature enough to like me, I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

Ran. By marrying her, I suppose.—Capable of friendship, love, and tenderness! ha! ha! ha! that a man of your sense should talk so! If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet. My lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

Both. My Lord Coke!

Ran. Yes, *my* Lord Coke. What he says of one woman, I say of the whole sex; "I take their bodies, you their minds; which has the better bargain?"

Frank. There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose, therefore, we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr. Bellamy; and you want sleep, I am sure.

Ran. Sleep! mere loss of time, and hinderance of business.—We men of spirit, sir, are above it.

Bel. Whither shall we go?

Frank. Into the Park. My chariot is at the door.

Bel. Then if my servant calls, you will send him after us? [*Exeunt.*

Ran. I will. [*Looking on the Card*] *Clarinda's compliments.*—A pox of this head of mine; never once to ask where she was to be found! It's plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my inquiries. No matter; I shall meet her in my walks.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. There is no letter nor message, sir.

Ran. Then my things, to dress.—"I take her body, you her mind; which has the better bargain?"

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

Enter MRS. STRICTLAND *and* JACINTHA, *meeting.*

Mrs. Strict. Good morrow, my dear Jacintha.

Jac. Good morrow to you, madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come and work with us.

Mrs. Strict. She work! she is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

Jac. It is a pity she should be ever tired with what is so agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleased with her company.

Mrs. Strict. And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleased with her. You must

rally her upon her partner at Bath; for I fancy part of her rest has been disturbed on his account.

Jac. Was he really a pretty fellow?

Mrs. Strict. That I can't tell; I did not dance myself, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

Jac. Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love as those who are in the secret themselves.

Enter JENNY.

Jen. Madam, Mr. Strictland is inquiring for you. Here has been Mr. Buckle, with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

Jac. Mr. Bellamy said, indeed, he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here. [*Exit* JENNY.] What signifies fortune, when it only makes us slaves to other people?

Mrs. Strict. Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr. Strictland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Though Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

Jac. I cannot help saying I did observe it.

Mrs. Strict. I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

Enter MR. STRICTLAND.

Strict. Oh, your servant, madam! Here, I have received a letter from Mr. Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say.—You know my sentiments; nay, so does he.

Jac. For Heaven's sake consider, sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion: we have known each other long. My father valued and loved him; and I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

Strict. Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

Jac. And you take a fatherly care of me.

Strict. I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

Jac. You may easily get rid of the trouble.

Strict. By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals?

Jac. Which are very reasonable, in my opinion.

Strict. Oh, very modest ones truly; and a very modest gentleman he is that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady, of thirty thousand pounds fortune, should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year! He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love: what does he think will excuse me?

Mrs. Strict. Well, but Mr. Strictland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

Strict. Well, well, seven o'clock's the time; and if the man has had the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade somebody or other to give him a better estate, I give him my consent, not else. His servant waits below: you may tell him I shall be at home. [*Exit* JACINTHA.] But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you could not have breathed a minute without your Clarinda.

Mrs. Strict. Why, the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

Strict. Look ye, Mrs. Strictland—you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers till you have cleared my house of this Clarinda.

Mrs. Strict. How can her innocent gaiety have offended you? she is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities—

Strict. As women of honour generally have. I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

Mrs. Strict. But, sir——

Strict. But, madam——Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family, to debauch it.

Mrs. Strict. Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town as her engagements would permit. I little imagined you could have been displeased at my having so agreeable a companion.

Strict. There was a time when I was company enough for leisure hours.

Mrs. Strict. There was a time when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile; but those happy days, I know not why, have long been over.

Strict. I cannot bear a rival, even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends. No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves but one or both are the worse for it.

Mrs. Strict. Dear Mr. Strictland—

Strict. This I know, and will not suffer.

Mrs. Strict. It grieves me, sir, to see you so much in earnest: but, to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

Strict. Do it——hark ye——your request?——Why yours? 'tis mine—my command—tell her so. I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

Mrs. Strict. [*In tears.*] You fright me, sir; but it shall be as you please. [*Goes out.*

Strict. Ha! have I gone too far? I am not master of myself.—Mrs. Strictland. [*She returns.*] Understand me right. I do not mean, by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence; but by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train

of mischief which you do not foresee. I was, perhaps, too harsh; therefore do it in your own way; but let me see the house fairly rid of her.

[*Exit* STRICTLAND.

Mrs. Strict. His earnestness in this affair amazes me: I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda, and yet I'll answer for her honour. What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—for, at all events, Mr. Strictland must be obeyed. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

St. James's Park.

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Bel. Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind, he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

Frank. Even so.—Never was prude more resolute in chastity and ill-nature, than I was fixed in indifference: but love has raised me from that inactive state above the being of a man.

Bel. 'Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has: but pray bring this rapture into order a little; and tell me, regularly, how, where, and when.

Frank. If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once; but, as I am armed against reason, I answer—at Bath, on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

Bel. Danced!—and was that all? But who is she? what is her name? her fortune? where does she live?

Frank. Hold! hold! not so many hard questions.

Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath; the moment I saw her, I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gained such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast before. I waited on her home; and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown: she had set out for London two hours before; and in a chariot and six, you rogue!

Bel. But was it her own, Charles?

Frank. That I don't know; but it looks better than being dragged to town in the stage. That day and the next I spent in inquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her; they knew nothing of her. So, without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en called for my boots, and rode post after her.

Bel. And how do you find yourself after your journey?

Frank. Why, as yet, I own I am but upon a cold scent; but a woman of her sprightliness and gentility cannot but frequent all public places; and when once she is found, the pleasure of the chase will overpay the pains of rousing her. Oh, Bellamy! there was something peculiarly charming in her, that seemed to claim my further acquaintance; and if in the other more familiar parts of life she shines with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her!

Bel. But if, at last, she should prove unworthy—

Frank. I would endeavour to forget her.

Bel. Promise me that, Charles, [*Takes his hand*] and I allow——But we are interrupted.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

Meg. Whom have we here? my old friend Frankly! Thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee.—How hast thou done these five hundred years?

Frank. Even as you see me—well; and at your service ever.

Meg. Ha! who's that?

Frank. A friend of mine. Mr. Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, sir—as honest a fellow as any in life.

Meg. Pho! pry'thee! pox! Charles——Don't be silly—sir, I am your humble: any one who is a friend of my Frankly's, I am proud of embracing.

Bel. Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

Meg. Oh, sir!—Well, Charles; what, dumb? Come, come; you may talk, though you have nothing to say—as I do. Let us hear—where have you been?

Frank. Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

Meg. Bath! the most ridiculous place in life! amongst tradesmen's wives that hate their husbands; and people of quality, that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste, no *goût;* and, for *divertimenti,* if it were not for the puppet-show, *la vertu* would be dead amongst them. But the news, Charles; the ladies—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

Frank. 'Faith and so it did, Jack! the ladies are grown such idiots in love. The cards have so debauched their five senses, that love, almighty love himself, is utterly neglected.

Meg. It is the strangest thing in life; but it is just so with us abroad. 'Faith, Charles, to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the service of the ladies—the

modest ones I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect, as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's pocket and constitution, that, 'foregad, he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a gondolier, who would list himself into their service.

Frank. A free confession, truly, Jack, for one of your coat.

Bel. The ladies are obliged to you.

Enter BUCKLE, *with a Letter to* BELLAMY.

Meg. Oh, Lard, Charles! I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you; poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead.

Frank. Well, well, get you another, and all will be well again.

Meg. No; the rogue broke me so much china, and gnawed my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that when he was dead, I began not to endure him.

Bel. Exactly at seven! run back and assure him I will not fail. [*Exit* BUCKLE.] Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

Meg. This gentleman was my monkey, sir; an odd sort of a fellow, that used to divert me, and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always made one in our *converzationi*. But, Mr. Bellamy, I saw a servant; I hope no engagement—for you two positively shall dine with me: I have the finest macaroni in life. Oblige me so far.

Bel. Sir, your servant; what say you, Frankly?

Meg. Pho! pox! Charles, you shall go. My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

Frank. Ranger swears they can't be maids, they are so good-natured. Well, I agree, on condition

I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

Meg. Ay, ay; you shall do just what you will. But how shall we do? my post-chaise won't carry us all.

Frank. My chariot is here; and I will conduct Mr. Bellamy.

Bel. Mr. Meggot, I beg pardon; I can't possibly dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

Meg. Out of town! No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the dilettanti I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three. [*Exit.*

Frank. Ha! ha! ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni!

Bel. A special acquaintance I have made to-day!

Frank. For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely, and you cannot oblige him more than by showing him how he can be of service to you.

Bel. Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

Frank. Right—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me; see her first, and then blame me if you can.

Bel. So far from blaming you, Charles, that, if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

Frank. That I am afraid will not do. For you know less of her than I: but if in your walks you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her. Wheresoe'er she is, she cannot long lie hid. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

St. James's Park.

Enter JACINTHA, CLARINDA, *and* MRS. STRICTLAND.

Jac. Ay, ay; we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

Clar. Why, I cannot but own I never had thought of any man that troubled me but of him.

Mrs. Strict. Then I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

Clar. Indeed you are mistaken. I have not had one scruple since.

Jac. Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

Clar. Oh, the greatest of all inducements—curiosity: let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power: but when once a woman has awaked his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile, without the least fear of losing him at last.

Jac. Now do I heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve. Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

Clar. I care not how soon. I long to meet with

such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such joint-babies in love, they have no feeling; they are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and, accordingly as we flatter, or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours: they are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill-nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities; or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

Mrs. Strict. No man of sense, or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, or ever can, think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

Jac. Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

Clar. Amazing! Why every woman can give eas[illegible]e. You cannot be in earnest.

Mrs. Strict. I can assure you she is; and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching [illegible]ame of

Clar. Impossible! Who ever heard the n[illegible]t? But love mentioned without an idea of torme[illegible] pray let us hear.

Jac. Nay there is nothing to hear that [illegible] I know of. novel is not

Clar. So I suspected, indeed. The well prepared likely to be long, when the lady is so for the *denouement*.

Jac. The novel, as you call it, is not so short as rk have been long you may imagine. I and my spa[illegible]y with my father, I acquainted: as he was continual[illegible]nd the manner of his soon perceived he loved me; a[illegible] pleased and won me expressing that love was wha[illegible] most.

Clar. Well; and how w[illegible]as it? the old bait, flat-nt ye. tery; dear flattery, I warra[illegible] I had a more sensible de-

Jac. No, indeed; but[illegible]e drift of his whole behaviour light—in perceiving "

was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

Clar. The rustic! what, did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

Mrs. Strict. He did, it seems, what pleased her better; he flattered her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

Clar. On my conscience, you are well matched!

Jac. So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence), nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

Clar. Heyday! O' my conscience, thou art a brave girl. Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

Jac. And thou art the first finished coquette who never had any honesty at all.

Mrs. Strict. Come, come, you are both too good for either of those characters.

Clar. And my dear Mrs. Strictland here is the first young married woman of spirit, who has an ill-natured fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves. Good Heaven! if I had such a husband——

Mrs. Strict. You would be just as unhappy as I am!

Clar. But come now, confess—do you not long to be a widow?

Mrs. Strict. 'Would I were any thing but what I am!

Clar. Then go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know——

Mrs. Strict. Pray be silent. You know my resolution.

Clar. I know you have no resolution.

Mrs. Strict. You are a mad creature—but I forgive you.

Clar. It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But since you won't be persuaded to your good, I will think of making you easy in your submission, as soon as ever I can. I dare say I may have the same lodging I had last year: I can know immediately.—I see my chair; and so, ladies, both adieu. [*Exit.*

Jac. Come, Mrs. Strictland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr. Bellamy comes.

Mrs. Strict. Let us return then, to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr. Strictland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

Jac. Lord, madam, what do you mean?

Mrs. Strict. Self-interest only, child. Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Dear Mrs. Strictland——I am so confused, and so out of breath——

Mrs. Strict. Why, what's the matter?

Jac. I protest you fright me.

Clar. Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frightened, and so pleased. In short then, the dear man is here!

Mrs. Strict. Here—Lord—where?

Clar. I met him this instant; I saw him at a distance, turned short, and ran hither directly. Let us go home.—I tell you he follows me.

Mrs. Strict. Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

Clar. Ay! But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

Mrs. Strict. Come then.—Ha! ha! ha!

Jac. Ay, poor Clarinda!——*Allons*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now, you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her, as you would the surest arrow in your quiver.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Street before MR. STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and* MRS. STRICTLAND.

Clar. Lord!—Dear Jacintha—For heaven's sake make haste: he'll overtake us before we get in.

Jac. Overtake us! why he is not in sight.

Clar. Is not he? Ha! Sure I have not dropt my twee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Strict. Here he is——

Clar. In——In——In then.

Jac. [*Laughing.*] What, without your twee?

Clar. Pshaw! I have lost nothing——In, in—I'll follow you. [*Exeunt into the House,* CLARINDA *last.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. It is impossible I should be deceived. My eyes, and the quick pulses at my heart, assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heaven! and the door left open too.—A fair invitation, by all the rules of love!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in Mr. STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter CLARINDA, FRANKLY *following her.*

Frank. I hope, madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion; since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forced to it.

Clar. To my behaviour, sir!

Frank. You cannot but remember me at Bath, madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand—

Clar. I do remember, sir; but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

Frank. What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misinterpretation. I only feared, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath, you might have the same to do it now; and though my happiness was so nearly concerned, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than to be impertinently inquisitive.

Clar. Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness, that I can easily forgive it; though I don't see how your happiness is at all concerned.

Frank. No, madam! I believe you are the only lady who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be insensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

Clar. How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise. If you did not all of you say the same things to every woman, we should cer-

tainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

Frank. Could you have the least sense of what I feel, whilst I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you; may I not say that——

Clar. Sir, this is carrying the——

Frank. When I danced with you at Bath, I was charmed with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration: but my hope of seeing you afterwards, kept in my passion till a more proper time should offer. You cannot, therefore, blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

Clar. This behaviour, sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

Frank. There is nothing, madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath?

Enter JOHN.

John. Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

Clar. Very well, I come—[*Exit* JOHN.] You see, sir, I am called away: but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance, that the business which brings me to town, will keep me here some time.

Frank. How generous it is in you thus to ease the heart, that knew not how to ask for such a favour! I fear to offend—but this house, I suppose, is yours?

Clar. You will hear of me, if not find me here.

Frank. I then take my leave. [*Exit.*

Clar. I'm undone!—He has me!

Enter MRS. STRICTLAND.

Mrs. Strict. Well; how do you find yourself?

Clar. I do find—that, if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.

Mrs. Strict. A very terrible prospect indeed!

Clar. But I must tease him a little——Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of hers, and learn to give ease! No; positively I shall never do it.

Mrs. Strict. Poor Jacintha has met with what I feared from Mr. Strictland's temper; an utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more ill-natured.

Clar. Well; now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount: I love difficulties; and yet, I don't know—it is as well as it is.

Mrs. Strict. Ha! ha! ha! Come, the tea waits.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MR. STRICTLAND.

Strict. These doings in my house distract me. I met a fine gentleman: when I inquired who he was—why, he came to Clarinda. I met a footman too—and he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is decamped. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman—and they have not been long acquainted: but then they were by themselves at Bath; that hurts—that hurts—they must be watched, they must; I know them; I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites—Ha! suppose I bribe the maid: she's of their council—the manager of their secrets: it shall be so: money will do it, and I shall know all that passes.—Lucetta!

Luc. Sir!

Strict. Lucetta!

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Sir! If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone. [*Aside.*

Strict. She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face: I like it—it looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet, if she should be false, she can do me most harm. [*Aside.*

Luc. Pray, sir, speak out.

Strict. [*Aside.*] No; she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

Luc. I am not able to understand you.

Strict. I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

Luc. Then what did you call me for?—If he should be in love with my face! [*Aside.*

Strict. Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

Luc. Yes, sir.—Mighty odd this! It gives me time, however, to send Buckle with this letter to his master. [*Aside. Exit.*

Strict. Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finished me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure to the contrary: but whilst I am in doubt, I am miserable.

Enter TESTER.

Test. Does your honour please to want me?

Strict. Ay, Tester—I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look, make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*] Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you?

Test. Yes, sir,—very tolerable.

Strict. I like his simplicity well. It promises honesty. [*Aside.*] I have a secret, Tester, to impart to

you; a thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

Test. Yes, sir—No, sir.

Strict. But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes; she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once.—So I will. [*Aside.*] Tester, go send Lucetta hither.

Test. Yes, sir, here she is.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

Strict. Get you down, Tester.

Test. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Luc. If you want me, sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

Strict. Well, well; what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

Luc. Why, sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

Strict. Well, well, I believe you're honest.

[*Shuts the door.*

Luc. What can be at the bottom of all this?

[*Aside.*

Strict. So; we cannot be too private. Come hither, hussy; nearer yet.

Luc. Lord, sir! you are not going to be rude. I vow I will call out.

Strict. Hold your tongue. Does the baggage laugh at me? She does; she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife. [*Aside.*] I have not leisure now, Lucetta—some other time—Hush! Did not the bell ring? Yes, yes; my wife wants you. Go, go to her. [*Pushes her out.*] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Piazza, Covent Garden.

Enter BELLAMY *and* JACK MEGGOT.

Bel. Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

Meg. None, in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

Bel. You are too obliging, sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you: I only know that my Jacintha has taken such a resolution.

Meg. Therefore we should be prepared; for when once a lady has such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. 'Foregad, Mr. Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire!

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. "Buxom and lively as the bounding doe ——Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love." Tol de rol lol! [*Sings and dances.*

Bel. Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

Frank. Who should it be, but—I shall know her name to-morrow. [*Sings and dances.*

Meg. What is the matter, ho? Is the man mad?

Frank. Even so gentlemen; as mad as love and joy can make me.

Bel. But inform us whence this joy proceeds?

Frank. Joy! joy! my lads! She's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

Meg. Egad, her charms have bewitched the man, I think; but who is she?

Bel. Come, come, tell us, who is this wonder?

Frank. But will you say nothing?

Bel. Nothing, as I live.

Frank. Nor you?

Meg. I'll be as silent as the grave.

Frank. With a tombstone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries.

Meg. I'll be as secret as a debauched prude—

Frank. Whose sanctity every one suspects. Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature; keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But to leave fooling, listen to me, both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that echo may not catch the sinking sound ——I cannot tell who she is, 'faith, Tol de rol lol.

Meg. Mad! mad! very mad!

Frank. All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again. Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she! [*Aside.*

Bel. So I did suppose. [*To* FRANKLY.

Meg. Poor Charles! for Heaven's sake, Mr. Bellamy, persuade him to go to his chamber, whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu. [*Aside to* BELLAMY.] B'ye, Charles; ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Frank. Oh, love! thou art a gift worthy of a god, indeed! dear Bellamy, nothing now could add to my pleasure, but to see my friend as deep in love as I am.

Bel. I show my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

Frank. The light of friendship looks but dim, before the brighter flame of love. Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

Bel. Frankly, I am now going to——

Frank. Why that face, now? Your humble ser-

vant, sir. My flood of joy shall not be stopped by your melancholy fits, I assure you. [*Going.*

Bel. Stay, Frankly, I beg you, stay. What would you say, now, if I really were in love?

Frank. Why, 'faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

Bel. To confess the truth, then, I am in love.

Frank. And do you confess it as if it were a sin? Proclaim it aloud; glory in it; boast of it as your greatest virtue. Swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

Bel. Why, then, by the bright eyes of her I love—

Frank. Well said!

Bel. By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman—

Frank. Bravo!

Bel. I swear, I am as true an enamorato as ever tagged rhyme.

Frank. And art thou, then, thoroughly in love? Come to my arms, thou dear companion of my joys! [*They embrace.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Why—Hey!—is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

Bel. Pshaw! Ranger here?

Ran. Yes, Ranger is here, and, perhaps, does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. 'Faith, I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer—Here is a letter, Mr. Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

Bel. What do you mean?

Ran. Do you deal much in these paper tokens?

Bel. Oh, the dear kind creature! it is from herself. [*To* FRANKLY.

Ran. What, is it a pair of laced shoes she wants? or have the boys broke her windows?

Bel. Hold your profane tongue!

Frank. Nay, pr'ythee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contained in those few lines.

Ran. Pr'ythee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is as I have always said—your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

Bel. I cannot be disobliged now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

Ran. Your servant Buckle and I changed commissions; he went on my errand, and I came on his.

Bel. 'Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

Ran. He will be here presently; but I demand to know what I have brought you.

Frank. Ay, ay; out with it! you know we never blab, and may be of service.

Bel. Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

Ran. Why, it is a pretty convenient time indeed.

Bel. By all that's happy, she promises in this letter here, to leave her guardian this very night, and run away with me!

Ran. How is this?

Bel. Nay, I know not how myself; she says at the bottom—— *Your servant has full instructions from Lucetta how to equip me for my expedition. I will not trust myself with you to-night, because I know it is inconvenient; therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging, it is no matter how far off my guardian's.*

Yours,

JACINTHA.

Ran. Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

Frank. Why, this must be a girl of spirit, 'faith!

Bel. And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me. She has thirty thousand pounds to her fortune!

Ran. The devil she has!

Bel. And never plays at cards.

Ran. Nor does any one thing like any other woman, I suppose.

Frank. Not so, I hope, neither.

Bel. Oh, Frankly, Ranger, I never felt such ease before! the secret's out, and you don't laugh at me!

Frank. Laugh at thee, for loving a woman with thirty thousand pounds! thou art a most unaccountable fellow!

Ran. How the devil could he work her up to this? I never could have had the face to have done it. But —I know not how—there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

Bel. Oh, your servant, good sir. You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

Ran. Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow, and so will have nothing to do in this affair: I'll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm; that's all I can answer for; and so, success attend you. [*Going.*] I cannot leave you quite to yourself, neither; for, if this should prove a round-house affair, as I make no doubt it will—I believe I may have more interest there than you; and so, sir, you may hear of me at—— [*Whispers.*

Bel. For shame, Ranger! the most noted gaming-house in town.

Ran. Forgive me this once, my boy. I must go, 'faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. [*Exit.*

Frank. But where do you design to lodge her?

Bel. At Mr. Meggot's; he is already gone to prepare for her reception.

Frank. The properest place in the world: his aunts will entertain her with honour.

Bel. And the newness of her acquaintance will pre-

vent its being suspected. Frankly, give me your hand: this is a very critical time.

Frank. Pho! none of your musty reflections now! When a man is in love, to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here is your servant, with a face full of business—I'll leave you together. I shall be at the King's arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. [*Exit.*

Enter BUCKLE.

Bel. So, Buckle, you seem to have your hands full.

Buckle. Not fuller than my head, sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope.

Bel. Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instructions.

Buckle. Why, the affair stands thus.—As Mr. Strictland sees the door locked and barred every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose I have a ladder of ropes.

Bel. Good.

Buckle. And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in, I have, in this other bundle, a suit of boy's clothes, which I believe will fit her: at least, it will serve the time she wants it. You will soon be for pulling it off, I suppose.

Bel. Why, you are in spirits, you rogue!

Buckle. These I am now to convey to Lucetta.—Have you any thing to say, sir?

Bel. Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed. Bring me word to Mr. Meggot's, how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Street before MR. STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter BELLAMY, *in a Chairman's Coat.*

Bel. How tediously have the minutes passed these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay.—Hold, let me not mistake—this is the house. [*Pulls out his Watch.*] By Heaven, it is not yet the hour!—I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here till the happy instant comes. [*Exit.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frankly. Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame: Now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way, to take a view of my queen's palace by moonlight—Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored—the door is open! [*Retires.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. [*Under the Window.*] Madam! madam, hist! Madam——How shall I make her hear?

JACINTHA, *in Boy's Clothes, at the Window.*

Jac. Who is there? What's the matter?

Luc. It is I, madam: you must not pretend to stir till I give the word; you'll be discovered if you do.

Frank. [*Aside.*] What do I see? A man! My heart misgives me!

Luc. My master is below, sitting up for Mrs. Clarinda. He raves as if he was mad about her being out so late.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Here is some intrigue or other. I must see more of this before I give further way to love.

Luc. One minute he is in the street; the next he is in the kitchen; now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes, when she vouchsafes to venture home.

Jac. I long to have it over. Get me but once out of his house.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Cowardly rascal! 'would I were in his place!

Luc. If I can but fix him any where, I can let you out myself—You have the ladder ready in case of necessity?

Jac. Yes, yes. [*Exit* LUCETTA.

Frank. [*Aside.*] The ladder! this must lead to some discovery: I shall watch you, my young gentleman, I shall.

Enter CLARINDA *and* JAMES.

Clar. This whist is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I am too late for Mr. Strictland's sober hours.

Jac. Ha! I hear a noise.

Clar. No; I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [*Giving the* SERVANT *Money.*] I am safe. [*Exit* JAMES.

Jac. Sure, it must be he! Mr. Bellamy—sir.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Does not he call me?

Clar. [*Aside.*] Ha! who's that? I am frightened out of my wits—a man!

Jac. Is it you?

Frank. Yes, yes; 'tis I, 'tis I.

Jac. Listen at the door.

Frank. I will; 'tis open——There's no noise; all's quiet.

Clar. Sure, it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha. [*Aside.*

Frank. You may come down the ladder—quick.

Jac. Catch it then, and hold it.

Frank. I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of. [*Aside.*

Clar. With a ladder too! I'll assure you. But I must see the end of it. [*Aside.*

Jac. Hark! did not somebody speak?

Frank. No, no; be not fearful—'Sdeath! we are discovered. [FRANKLY *and* CLARINDA *retire.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Hist! hist! are you ready?

Jac. Yes, may I venture?

Luc. Now is your time. He is in high conference with his privy counsellor, Mr. Tester. You may come down the back-stairs, and I'll let you out.

[*Exit* LUCETTA.

Jac. I will, I will, and am heartily glad of it.

[*Exit* JACINTHA.

Frank. [*Advancing.*] May be so; but you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

Clar. [*Advancing.*] How lucky it was I came home at this instant. I shall spoil his sport, I believe.—Do you know me, sir?

Frank. I am amazed! You here! This was unexpected indeed!

Clar. Why, I believe, I do come a little unexpectedly, but I shall amaze you more. I know the whole course of your amour:—all the process of your mighty passion, from its first rise——

Frank. What is all this?

Clar. To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

Frank. By Heaven, madam, I know not what you mean! I came hither, purely to contemplate on your beauties.

Clar. Any beauties, sir, I find will serve your turn. Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

Frank. Her!

Clar. Blush, blush, for shame! but be assured, you have seen the last, both of Jacintha and me. [*Exit.*

Frank. Jacintha! Hear me, madam—She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruined all his scheme. This it is to be in luck!

Enter BELLAMY, *behind.*

Bel. Ha! a man under the window!

Frank. No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

Enter JACINTHA *and runs to* FRANKLY.

Jac. I have at last got to you. Oh!

Frank. Be not frightened, lady.

Jack. Oh! I am abused! betrayed!

Bel. Betrayed! Frankly!

Frank. Bellamy!

Bel. I can scarce believe it, though I see it. Draw!

Frank. Hear me, Bellamy—lady—

Jac. Stay—do not fight!

Frank. I am innocent; it is all a mistake!

Jac. For my sake, be quiet! We shall be discovered! the family is alarmed!

Bel. You are obeyed. Mr. Frankly, there is but one way——

Frank. I understand you.—Any time but now.—You will certainly be discovered!—To-morrow, at your chambers.

Bel. Till then farewell.

[*Exeunt* BELLAMY *and* JACINTHA.

Frank. Then, when he is cool, I may be heard; and the real, though suspicious, account of this matter may be believed. Yet, amidst all this perplexity, it pleases me to find my fair incognita is jealous of my love.

Strict. [*Within.*] Where's Lucetta? Search every place.

Frank. Hark! the cry is up! I must be gone.

[*Exit* FRANKLY.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND, TESTER, *and* SERVANTS.

Strict. She's gone! she's lost! I am cheated! pursue her! seek her!

Test. Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

Serv. Sir, Mrs. Clarinda said she was in boy's clothes.

Strict. Ay, ay, I know it—Bellamy has her—Come along—Pursue her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Hark!——Was not the noise this way?—No, there is no game stirring. This same goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that, egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now I am in an admirable mood for a frolic: have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha! what have we here? a ladder!—this cannot be placed here for nothing—and a window open! Is it love, or mischief, now, that is going on within? I care not which—I am in a right cue for either. Up I go, neck or nothing. Stay—do I not run a greater chance of spoiling sport, than I do of making any? that I hate, as much as I love the other. There can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up. [*Goes up softly.*] All is hush—Ha! a light, and a woman! by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked! I'll in—Ha! she is gone again! I will

after her. [*Gets in at the Window.*] And, for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now, fortune, be my guide!

SCENE II.

MRS. STRICTLAND'S *Dressing Room.*

Enter MRS. STRICTLAND, *followed by* LUCETTA.

Mrs. Strict. Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

Luc. Never fear, madam; the lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

Mrs. Strict. Were Mr. Strictland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequence.

Luc. Then you had better be undressing. He may return immediately.

As she is sitting down at the Toilet, RANGER *enters behind.*

Ran. Young and beautiful! [*Aside.*

Luc. I have watched him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning——

Mrs. Strict. And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

Luc. I hope, madam, you are not angry. I thought it might have been of service to you, to know my master was jealous.

Ran. And her husband jealous! If she does but send away the maid, I am happy.

Mrs. Strict. [*Angrily.*] Leave me!

Luc. This it is to meddle with other people's affairs! [*Exit, in anger.*

Ran. What a lucky dog I am! I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence, assist me.

Mrs. Strict. [*Rising.*] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserved it of him.

Ran. Oh, cuckold him by all means; madam I am your man. [*She shrieks.*] Oh, fie, madam! if you squall so cursedly, you will be discovered.

Mrs. Strict. Discovered! What mean you, sir? do you come to abuse me?

Ran. I'll do my endeavour, madam; you can have no more.

Mrs. Strict. Whence came you?—How got you here?

Ran. Dear madam, so long as I am here, what signifies how I got here, or whence I came? but, that I may satisfy your curiosity, first, as to your whence came you? I answer, out of the street; and to your how got you here? I say, in at the window; it stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, madam, you are going to undress. I beg I may not incommode you.

Mrs. Strict. This is the most consummate piece of impudence!

Ran. For Heaven's sake, have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow, who long has loved you!

Mrs. Strict. What would the fellow have?

Ran. Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

Mrs. Strict. I cannot bear this insolence! Help! help!

Ran. Oh, hold that clamorous tongue, madam. Speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

Mrs. Strict. Gone! so I would have you.

Ran. Lord, madam, you are so hasty!

Mrs Strict. Shall I not speak, when a thief, a robber, breaks into my house at midnight? Help! help!

Ran. Ha! no one hears. Now, Cupid, assist me—Look ye, madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe, and fawn, and flatter, and lie! I have said more to you already, than I ever said to a woman in such circumstances, in all my life. But, since I find you will yield to no persuasion to your good, I will gently force you to be grateful. [*Throws down his Hat, and seizes her.*] Come, come, unbend that brow, and look more kindly on me.

Mrs. Strict. For shame, sir! thus, on my knees, let me beg for mercy. [*Kneeling.*

Ran. And thus on mine, let me beg the same. [*He kneels, catches, and kisses her.*

Strict. [*Within.*] Take away her sword; she'll hurt herself!

Mrs. Strict. Oh, Heavens! that is my husband's voice!

Ran. [*Rising.*] The devil it is.

Strict. [*Within.*] Take away her sword, I say!

Mrs. Strict. He is upon the stairs, now coming up! I am undone if he sees you.

Ran. Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

Mrs. Strict. Through this passage into the next chamber.

Ran. And so into the street. With all my heart. You may be perfectly easy, madam: mum's the word: I never blab. [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment. [*Exit* RANGER.

Mrs. Strict. So, he's gone. What could I have said, if he had been discovered?

Enter MR. STRICTLAND, *driving in* JACINTHA, LUCETTA *following.*

Strict. Once more, my pretty masculine madam, you are welcome home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done: for to-morrow morn-

ing, eight o'clock, is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

Jac. Oh, sir, when once a girl is equipped with a hearty resolution, it is not your worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a mind.

Strict. Oh, Lord! Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

Jac. Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolved to make me miserable here?

Strict. I have this night prevented your making yourself so; and will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have locked the doors and barred them, I warrant you. So here, troop to your chamber, and to bed, whilst you are well. Go! [*He treads on* RANGER's *Hat.*] What's here? a hat! a man's hat in my wife's dressing room!

[*Looking at the Hat.*

Mrs. Strict. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Strict. [*Taking up the Hat, and looking at* MRS. STRICTLAND.] Ha! by hell! I see 'tis true!

Mrs. Strict. My fears confound me. I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie! [*Aside.*

Strict. Mrs. Strictland, Mrs. Strictland, how came this hat into your chamber?

Luc. Are you that way disposed, my fine lady, and will not trust me? [*Aside.*

Strict. Speak, wretch, speak——

Jac. I could not have suspected this. [*Aside.*

Strict. Why dost thou not speak?

Mrs. Strict. Sir——

Strict. Guilt—'tis guilt that ties your tongue!

Luc. I must bring her off, however. [*Aside.*

Strict. My fears are just, and I am miserable—Thou worst of women!

Mrs. Strict. I know my innocence, and can bear this no longer.

Strict. I know you are false, and 'tis I who will bear my injuries no longer.

[*Both walk about in a passion.*

Luc. [*To* JACINTHA, *aside.*] Is not the hat yours? own it, madam.

[*Takes* JACINTHA'S *Hat away, and exit.*

Mrs. Strict. What ground, what cause have you for jealousy, when you yourself can witness, your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain; and expected even sooner than it happened? The abuse is gross and palpable.

Strict. Why, this is true.

Mrs. Strict. Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

Strict. And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

Jac. Dear Mrs. Strictland, be not concerned. When he has diverted himself a little longer with it, I suppose he will give me my hat again.

Strict. Your hat?

Jac. Yes, my hat. You brushed it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on purpose to abuse this lady or no you best know yourself.

Strict. It cannot be—'tis all a lie!

Jac. Believe so still, with all my heart; but the hat is mine. Now, sir, who does it belong to?

[*Snatches it, and puts it on.*

Strict. Why did she look so?

Jac. Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

Strict. Why did not you set me right at first?

Jac. Your hard usage of me, sir, is a sufficient reason why I should not be much concerned to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for your lady's sake I do it now; who deserves much better of you, than to be thus exposed for every slight suspicion. See where she sits—Go to her.

Mrs. Strict. [*Rising.*] Indeed, Mr. Strictland, I have a soul as much above——

Strict. Whew! now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear with their eternal rattle.

Jac. For shame, sir; go to her, and——

Strict. Well, well, what shall I say? I forgive—all is over. I, I, I forgive.

Mrs. Strict. Forgive! What do you mean?

Jac. Forgive her! is that all? Consider, sir—

Strict. Hold, hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive—or any thing. Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—[*Kisses her.*] For you, madam, I am infinitely obliged to you, and could find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar, but I have more conscience. Come, come, to your chamber. Here, take this candle.

Enter LUCETTA, *pertly.*

Luc. Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

Strict. No, no! no such thing, good madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to consult this night, I assure you. So, in, in. [*The Ladies take leave. Exit* JACINTHA.] Good night, kind madam.

Luc. Pox of the jealous fool! we might both have escaped out of the window purely. [*Aside.*

Strict. Go, get you down; and, do you hear, order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight exactly. [*Exit* LUCETTA.] So, she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country: and when she is there, I can manage as I think fit.

Mrs. Strict. Dear Mr. Strictland——

Strict. I am not in a humour, Mrs. Strictland, fit to talk with you. Go to bed. I will endeavour to get the better of my temper, if I can. I'll follow you. [*Exit* MRS. STRICTLAND.] How despicable have I made myself! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Another Chamber.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. All seems hushed again, and I may venture out. I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin. And shall so much love and claret as I am in possession of only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better keep me waking? Forbid it, fortune, and forbid it, love. This is the chamber, perhaps, of some bewitching female, and I may yet be happy.—Ha! a light! the door opens. A boy! pox on him!

[*He retires.*

Enter JACINTHA, *with a Candle.*

Jac. I have been listening at the door, and, from their silence, I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed together.

Ran. A pretty boy, 'faith! he seems uneasy.

[*Aside.*

Jac. [*Sitting down.*] What an unlucky night has this proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out unhappily.

Ran. He talks aloud. I'll listen. [*Aside.*

Jac. But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda should betray me?

Ran. Clarinda! she must be a woman. Well, what of her?

Jac. My guardian, else, would never have suspected my disguise.

Ran. Disguise! ah, it must be so! What eyes she has! What a dull rogue was I, not to suspect this sooner! [*Aside.*

Jac. Ha, I had forgot; the ladder is at the window, and I will boldly venture by myself. [*Rising briskly, sees* RANGER.] Ha! a man! and well dressed. Ha! Mrs. Strictland, are you then, at last, dishonest?

Ran. By all my wishes, she is a charming woman! lucky rascal! [*Aside.*

Jac. But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

Ran. What shall I say to her? No matter; any thing soft will do the business. [*Aside.*

Jac. Who are you?

Ran. A man, young gentleman.

Jac. And what would you have?

Ran. A woman.

Jac. You are very free, sir. Here are none for you.

Ran. Ay, but there is one, and a fair one too; the most charming creature Nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

Jac. What mean you, sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

Ran. You won't have far to go, however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be concealed from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

Jac. What will become of me? If I cry out, Mrs. Strictland is undone. This is my last resort. [*Aside.*

Ran. Pardon, dear lady, the boldness of this visit, which your guardian's care has forced me to; but I long have loved you, long doted on that beauteous face, and followed you from place to place, though, perhaps, unknown, and unregarded.

Jac. Here's a special fellow! [*Aside.*

Ran. Turn then an eye of pity on my sufferings;

and, by Heaven, one tender look from those piercing eyes, one touch of this soft hand——

[*Going to take her hand.*

Jac. Hold, sir! no nearer.

Ran. Would more than repay whole years of pain.

Jac. Hear me; but keep your distance, or I raise the family.

Ran. Blessings on her tongue, only for prattling to me! [*Aside.*

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shown on my account only——

Ran. You wrong your beauty, to think that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

Jac. You came to me, and me alone?

Ran. By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

Jac. Well said—Could I but believe you——

Ran. By Heaven she comes! Ah, honest Ranger, I never knew thee fail. [*Aside.*

Jac. Pray, sir, where did you leave this hat?

Ran. That hat! that hat—'tis my hat—I dropped it in the next chamber, as I was looking for yours.

Jac. How mean and despicable do you look now!

Ran. So, so! I am in a pretty pickle! [*Aside.*

Jac. You know by this, that I am acquainted with every thing that has passed within; and how ill it agrees with what you have professed to me. Let me advise you, sir, to begone immediately; through that window you may easily get into the street. One scream of mine, the least noise at that door, will wake the house.

Ran. Say you so? [*Aside.*

Jac. Believe me, sir, an injured husband is not so easily appeased: and a suspected wife, that is jealous of her honour—

Ran. Is the devil, and so let's have no more of her. Look ye, madam, [*Getting between the Door and her.*] I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one. Look on me well—I am as handsome, a strong, well-made fellow, as any about town; and since we are alone as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more private. [*Going to lay hold of her.*

Jac. I have a reputation, sir, and will maintain it.

Ran. You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

Jac. Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*

Ran. Consider your beauty and my desires.

Jac. If I were a man, you dared not use me thus.

Ran. I should not have the same temptation.

Jac. Hear me, sir; I will be heard. [*Breaks from him.*] There is a man who will make you repent this usage of me. Oh, Bellamy! where art thou now?

Ran. Bellamy!

Jac. Were he here, you durst not thus affront me. [*Bursting out a crying.*

Ran. His mistress, on my soul! [*Aside.*] You can love, madam; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely! [*Aside.*

Jac. I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour. I love, and glory in it.

Ran. Oh, brave! and you can write letters, you can. *I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient.*

Jac. Ha!

Ran. *Therefore, I beg you would procure me a lodging; 'tis no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha.*

Jac. The very words of my letter! I am amazed! Do you know Mr. Bellamy?

Ran. There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for: and he must have some value for me too, or he would never have shown me your pretty epistle: think of that, fair lady. The ladder is at the window, and so, madam, I hope delivering you

safe into his arms will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

Jac. Good Heaven! How fortunate is this!

Ran. I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestowed!

Jac. Your generosity transports me.

Ran. Let us lose no time then; the ladder's ready. Where was you to lodge?

Jac. At Mr. Meggot's.

Ran. At my friend Jacky's! better and better still.

Jac. Are you acquainted with him too?

Ran. Ay, ay; why, did I not tell you at first that I was one of your old acquaintance? I know all about you, you see: though, the devil fetch me, if I ever I saw you before! Now, madam, give me your hand.

Jac. And now, sir, have with you.

Ran. Then thou art a girl of spirit. And though I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well that takes you from me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Piazza.

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Bel. Psha! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

Frank. You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

Bel. I know nothing you had to do there at all.

Frank. I thought, Mr. Bellamy, you were a lover.

Bel. I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

Frank. And, therefore, should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

Bel. Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to love——

Frank. As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you: let not then your jealousy complete our misfortunes. I fear I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

Bel. It is impossible. She is gone—removed for ever from my sight: she is in the country by this time.

Frank. How did you lose her after we parted?

Bel. By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found. And, safe as I thought in our disguise, I actually put her into the chair, when Mr. Strictland and his servants

were in sight; which I had no sooner done, than they surrounded us, overpowered me, and carried her away.

Frank. Unfortunate, indeed! Could you not make a second attempt?

Bel. I had designed it; but when I came to the door I found the ladder removed; and, hearing no noise, seeing no lights, nor being able to make any body answer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as I now find them.—Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they may be still in town.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! what news of Jacintha?

Luc. News, sir! you fright me out of my senses! Why, is she not with you?

Bel. What do you mean? With me? I have not seen her since I lost her last night.

Luc. Good Heaven! then she is undone for ever.

Frank. Why, what's the matter?

Bel. Speak out—I'm all amazement!

Luc. She is escaped without any of us knowing how. Nobody missed her till morning. We all thought she went away with you. But Heaven knows now what may have happened.

Bel. Somebody must have accompanied her in her flight.

Luc. We know of nobody: we are all in confusion at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mistress says a stranger has her.

Bel. A stranger!

Luc. But Mrs. Clarinda——

Bel. Clarinda! who is she?

Luc. [*To* FRANKLY.] The lady, sir, whom you saw at our house last night.

Frank. Ha! what of her?

Luc. She says she is sure one Frankly is the man: she saw them together, and knows it to be true.

Frank. Damn'd fortune! [*Aside.*

Luc. Sure this is not Mr. Frankly!

Frank. Nothing will convince him now. [*Aside.*

Bel. [*Looking at* FRANKLY.] Ha! 'tis truth!—I see it is true. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search wherever you can. [*Puts her out.*] Now, Mr. Frankly, I have found you. You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

Frank. What do you mean?

Bel. Draw.

Frank. Are you mad?—By heavens, I am innocent!

Bel. I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on.—Defend yourself.

Frank. Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself, as I would against a madman.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What the devil! swords at noon-day! Have among you, 'faith! [*Parts them.*] What's here, Bellamy—yes, 'gad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly: put up, put up, both of you—or else—I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

Bel. We shall have a time——

Ran. [*Pushing* BELLAMY *one Way.*] A time for what?

Frank. I shall be always as ready to defend my innocence as now.

Ran. [*Pushing* FRANKLY *the other Way.*] Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—a mighty innocent fellow, no doubt! But what, in the name of common sense, is it that ails you both? are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing; and now you are cutting one another's throats—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslavering another—But I shall put you into better

humour, I warrant you——Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune—such a scheme——

Bel. Pr'ythee, leave fooling. What, art drunk?

Frank. He is always so, I think.

Ran. And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk! no; I am not drunk.—Tipsy, perhaps, with my good fortune—merry, and in spirits—though I have not fire enough to run my friend through the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have boxed it about——Champaign was the word for two whole hours by Shrewsbury clock.

Bel. Jack Meggot!—Why, I left him at one, going to bed!

Ran. That may be; but I made shift to rouse him and his family by four this morning. Ounds! I picked up a wench, and carried her to his house.

Bel. Ha!

Ran. Such a variety of adventures!—Nay, you shall hear——But, before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me half a dozen kisses beforehand: for the devil fetch me if that little jade, Jacintha, would give me one, though I pressed hard.

Bel. Who? Jacintha? press to kiss Jacintha?

Ran. Kiss her! ay; why not? is she not a woman, and made to be kissed?

Bel. Kiss her!—I shall run distracted!

Ran. How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bed-chamber, at midnight? If I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

Bel. Bedchamber at midnight! I can hold no longer——Draw.

Frank. Be easy, Bellamy. [*Interposing.*

Bel. He has been at some of his damned tricks with her.

Frank. Hear him out.

Ran. 'Sdeath! how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story most miserably. I should have told you first I was in another lady's chamber.

By the Lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes!

Frank. Ha! another lady!

Ran. Another; and stole in upon her whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel, blooming and young—

Frank. What, in the same house?

Bel. What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

Ran. Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor. The sweetest little angel—But I design to have another touch with her.

Frank. 'Sdeath! but you shall have a touch upon me first.

Bel. Stay, Frankly. [*Interposing.*

Ran. Why, what strange madness has possessed you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves?

Bel. What became of Jacintha?

Ran. Ounds! what have you done, that you must monopolise kissing?

Frank. Pr'ythee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

Bel. Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found. Dear boy, tell me.

Ran. Ay, now it is, honest Ranger, and, dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago my throat was to be cut ——I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you into all the secret, though he designed to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

Meg. So, save ye, save ye, lads! we have been frightened out of our wits for you. Not hearing of Mr. Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink, for fear of any accident.

Bel. Is she at your house?

Meg. Why, did you not know that? We despatched Master Ranger to you three hours ago.

Ran. Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come.—Hark ye, Frankly!—is your girl maid, wife, or widow?

Frank. A maid, I hope.

Ran. The odds are against you, Charles.——But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous. The devil is in it if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

Bel. He has certainly been at Mrs. Strictland herself. But, Frankly, I dare not look on you.

Frank. This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

Bel. Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. [*Exit.*

Frank. And I to make up matters with Clarinda. [*Exit.*

Ran. And I to some kind wench or other, Jack.—But where shall I find her? Heaven knows! And so my service to your monkey.

Meg. Adieu, rattlepate. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Hall of MR. STRICTLAND'S *House.*

Enter MRS. STRICTLAND *and* CLARINDA.

Mrs. Strict. But why in such a hurry, my dear? Stay till your servants can go along with you.

Clar. Oh, no matter; they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night,

I am sure Mr. Strictland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

Mrs. Strict. I am as much amazed at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it, I blush at my present behaviour to you.

Clar. No ceremony, dear child.

Mrs. Strict. No, Clarinda, I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But, I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

Clar. My dear, if the world will speak ill of me, for the little innocent gaiety, which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it, and am only sorry the world is so ill-natured: but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

Mrs. Strict. I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

Clar. You are so unfashionable a wife!—Why, last night's accident would have made half the wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discovered itself openly? And are not you innocent?—There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

Mrs. Strict. Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you—take care of Mr. Frankly, observe his temper well; and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

Clar. You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr. Strictland.

Enter MR. STRICTLAND *and* LUCETTA.

Strict. Lucetta says you want me, madam.

Clar. I trouble you, sir, only that I might return

you thanks for the civilities I have received in your family, before I took my leave.

Strict. Keep them to yourself, dear madam. As it is at my request that you leave my house, your thanks upon that occasion are not very desirable.

Clar. Oh, sir! you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, sir; and part with as little ceremony——

Strict. As we met.

Clar. The brute! [*Aside.*] My dear, good by; we may meet again. [*To* MRS. STRICTLAND.

Strict. If you dare trust me with your hand—

Clar. Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, sir, have with you.

[MR. STRICTLAND *leads* CLARINDA *out.*

Mrs. Strict. Are her instructions cruel, or kind, Lucetta? For I suppose they relate to Mr. Frankly.

Luc. Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, madam? But I will show you I am fit to be trusted, by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

Mrs. Strict. This answer is not so civil, I think.

Luc. I beg pardon, madam; I meant it not to offend.

Mrs. Strict. Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want, your assistance.

Enter MR. STRICTLAND.

Strict. She is gone; I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, madam, shall I conduct you up?

Mrs. Strict. There is something, sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish——

Strict. Perhaps so, madam; and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. [*Leads her out.*

Luc. 'Would I were once well settled with my young lady; for, at present, this is but an odd sort of

a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was, that belonged to none of us—that's certain; madam was in a fright—that is as certain; and I brought all off. Jacintha escaped, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd, all this!—[*Knocking.*] Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him too.

[*She opens the Door.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. So, my pretty handmaid, meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda?

Luc. Whom do you want, sir?

Frank. Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

Luc. Clarinda!—No such person lives here, I assure you.

Frank. Where then?

Luc. I don't know, indeed, sir.

Frank. Will you inquire within?

Luc. Nobody knows in this house, sir, you will find.

Frank. What do you mean? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here last night; and you yourself spoke of her being here this morning.—Not know!

Luc. No; none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

Frank. Why, 'faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast delivered this denial very handsomely; but let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had like to have cost me my life; now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress; I come from Mr. Bellamy; I come with my purse full of gold, that persuasive rhetoric, to win

you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda, once again.

Luc. She is not here, sir.

Frank. Direct me to her.

Luc. I can't do that neither.

Enter MR. STRICTLAND, *behind.*

Strict. I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice——Ha! [*Aside.*

Frank. Deliver this letter to her.

Strict. By all my fears, a letter! [*Aside.*

Luc. I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

Frank. Take it then, and with it this.

[*Kisses her, and gives her Money.*

Strict. Um! there are two bribes in a breath!—What a jade she is! [*Aside.*

Luc. Ay, this gentleman understands reason.

Frank. And be assured you oblige your mistress, while you are serving me.

Strict. Her mistress!—Damned sex, and damned wife!—thou art an epitome of that sex. [*Aside.*

Frank. And if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarged. [*Exit.*

Luc. The next step is to get her to read this letter.

Strict. [*Snatches the Letter.*] No noise—but stand silent there, whilst I read this. [*Breaks it open, and drops the Case.*] *Madam, the gaiety of a heart, happy as mine was yesterday, may, I hope, easily excuse the unseasonable visit I made your house last night.*—Death and the devil! confusion! I shall run distracted.—It is too much! There was a man, then, to whom the hat belonged; and I was gulled, abused, cheated, imposed on, by a chit, a child—Oh, woman! woman!—But I will be calm, search it to the bottom, and have a full revenge.

Luc. [*Aside.*] So, here's fine work! He'll make himself very ridiculous though.

Strict. [Reads on.] *I know my innocence will appear*

so manifestly, that I need only appeal to the lady who accompanied you at Bath.—Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine Madam Clarinda.—*And I do not doubt but her good nature,* (bawd! bawd!) *will not let you persist in injuring your obedient, humble servant,*

CHARLES FRANKLY.

Now, who can say my jealousy lacked foundation, or my suspicion of fine madam's innocent gaiety was unjust?—Gaiety! why, ay, 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd——My wife may be a whore in gaiety. What a number of things become fashionable, under the notion of gaiety! What, you received this epistle in gaiety too; and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came next upon her?—Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me?

Luc. I would, if I dared, laugh heartily.—Be pleased sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lies there.

Strict. Ha!

Luc. I have not touched it, sir. It is the case that letter came in; and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

Strict. This is directed to Clarinda!

Luc. Oh! is it so? Now read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

Strict. I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are—

Luc. Lud! Lud! you'll make a body mad.

Strict. Hold your impertinent tongue.

Luc. You'll find the thing to be just as I say, sir.

Strict. Begone. [*Exit* LUCETTA.] They must be poor at the work indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident, and I am miserable. But for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt, shall be her portion. I am determined on the thing: and when once it is over, I may, perhaps, be easy. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Street.

CLARINDA *brought in a Chair,* RANGER *following.*

Ran. Hark ye, chairmen! damn your confounded trot. Go slower.

Clar. Here stop.

Ran. By heavens! the monsters hear reason, and obey.

Clar. [*Letting down the Window.*] What troublesome fellow was that?

1 *Chair.* Some rake, I warrant, that cannot carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

Clar. There—And pray do you take care that I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*

Ran. That's as much as to say now, pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it.

1 *Chair.* Stand off, sir.

Ran. Pr'ythee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endeavouring to get in.*

2 *Chair.* You come not here.

Ran. Lodgings to be let: a pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family.—There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Hark ye, rogues; I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket—there it is—I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps.

[*Throws down the Money, and goes in.*

1 *Chair.* What, Pat, have you let the gentleman in?

2 *Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipped by whilst you was picking up the money.—Come, take up. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

CLARINDA'S *Lodgings.*

Enter CLARINDA, *and* FANNY *following.*

Clar. [*A Noise between* RANGER *and* LANDLADY.] I should certainly know that voice. [RANGER *talks with the* LANDLADY.] My madcap cousin Ranger, as I live! I am sure he does not know me. If I could but hide my face now, what sport I should have! A mask, a mask! Run and see if you can find a mask.

Fanny. I believe there is one above.

Clar. Run, run, and fetch it.—[*Exit* FANNY.]—Here he comes.

Enter RANGER *and* LANDLADY.

How unlucky this is! [*Turning from them.*

Land. What's your business here, unmannerly sir?

Ran. Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let. 'Gad, a very pretty neat tenement.—But hark ye, is it real and natural, all that, or only patched up and new painted this summer season, against the town fills?

Land. What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down—

Enter FANNY *with a Mask.*

Fanny. Here is a very dirty one.

[*Aside to* CLARINDA.

Clar. No matter—now we shall see a little what he would be at. [*Aside.*

Land. This is an honest house. For all your laced waistcoat, I'll have you thrown down, neck and heels.

Ran. Pho! not in such a hurry, good old lady.—A mask! nay, with all my heart. It saves a world of blushing. Have you ne'er a one for me?—I am apt to be ashamed myself, on these occasions.

Land. Get you down, I say———

Ran. Not if I guess right, old lady.—Madam; [*To* CLARINDA, *who makes signs to the* LANDLADY *to retire*] look ye there, now! that a woman should live to your age, and know so little of the matter.—Begone. [*Exit* LANDLADY.] By her forwardness, this should be a whore of quality. My boy, Ranger, thou art in luck to-day! She won't speak, I find—then I will. [*Aside.*] Delicate lodgings, truly, madam; and very neatly furnished. A very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mixed company: but, my dear charming creature, does not that door open to a more commodious apartment, for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock——Fast, humph! that won't do.—'Sdeath, you are a beautiful woman; I am sure you are. Pr'ythee, let me see your face: It is your interest, child; the longer you delay, the more I shall expect. Therefore, [*Taking her Hand*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me take your hand; and whilst you gently, with the other, let daylight in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that, with my longing lips, I may receive the softest, best impression. [*She unmasks.*] Clarinda!

Clar. Ha! ha! your servant, cousin Ranger—Ha! ha! ha!

Ran. Oh, your humble servant, madam. You had like to have been beholden to your mask, cousin.—I must brazen it out. [*Aside.*

Clar. Ha! ha! ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, and the genteel negligence of your whole person, made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet coz.—Ha! ha!

Ran. Oh, I knew you too, but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet! and, egad, you never find me behind hand in a frolic. But, since it is otherwise, my merry, good-humoured cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town, as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance. And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

Clar. Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face, you were pleased to say so many pretty things of before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality—

Ran. Hold! hold! a truce with your satire, sweet coz; or, if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation, call for your tea-water, and let it be in its proper element. Come, your tea, your tea.

Enter MAID.

Clar. With all my heart——Who's there? Get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

Ran. That is according as you behave, madam.

Clar. Oh, sir! I am very sensible of the favour.

Ran. Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue, besides yourself, I would stay with ten minutes (and I have not known her above these twelve hours:) the insipidity, or the rancour of their discourse, is insufferable.—'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother!

Clar. Ha! ha! ha! the ladies are highly obliged to you, I vow.

Ran. I tell you what; the lady I speak of was obliged to me; and the generous girl is ready to own it.

Clar. And, pray, when was it you did virtue this considerable service?

Ran. But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine conveyed me into her chamber, where I found her, young and beautiful, alone at midnight, dressed like a soft Adonis; her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders——

Clar. In boy's clothes! this is worth attending to. [*Aside.*

Ran. 'Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my cater-cousin.

Clar. How did you discover it at last?

Ran. Why, 'faith, she very modestly dropped me a hint of it herself.

Clar. Herself! If this should be Jacintha! [*Aside.*

Ran. Ay, 'foregad, did she; which I imagined a good sign at midnight, eh, cousin! So I e'en invented a long story of a passion I had for her, though I had never seen her before—you know my old way; ——and said so many such tender things——

Clar. As you said to me just now?

Ran. Pho! quite in another style, I assure you.—It was midnight, and I was in a right cue.

Clar. Well; and what did she answer to all these protestations?

Ran. Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected——

Clar. To be sure.

Ran. 'Gad, like a free-hearted, honest girl, she frankly told me she liked another better than she liked me; that I had something in my face that showed I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust

herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

Clar. Oh, brave, and how did you bear this?

Ran. Why, curse me if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me.

Clar. No!

Ran. Never. I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passion at all. 'Gad, I loved the good-natured girl for it; took her at her word, stole her out of the window, and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

Clar. And her name is Jacintha.

Ran. Ha!

Clar. Your amours are no secrets, sir. You see, you might as well have told me all the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know.

Ran. All! Why, what do you know?

Clar. Nay, nothing. I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot be dropped in a lady's chamber——

Ran. The devil!

Clar. But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

Ran. Here has been fine work! [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

Clar. By being in the same house.

Ran. In the same house!

Clar. Ay, in the same house; a witness of the confusion you have made.

Ran. Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! it must be so. [*Aside.*

Clar. And let me tell you, sir, that even the dull, low-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame creatures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

Ran. Yes, cousin; but I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*

Clar. If you reflect, cousin, you will find a great

deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

Ran. To be sure.

Clar. These are the high-mettled pleasures of you men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you, in reality, think your Burgundy and your Bacchus, your Venus and your Loves, an excuse for all this? Fie, cousin; fie!

Ran. No, cousin.

Clar. What, dumb! I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

Ran. It is as you say; when we are sober and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry; and, yet, the very next minute, we run again into the same absurdities.

Clar. What! moralizing, cousin! ha! ha! ha!

Ran. What you know is not half, not a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic; and yet the very next petticoat I saw this morning I must follow it, and be damned to me! though, for aught I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

Clar. Whose life, sir?

Ran. And here do I stand prating to you, now.

Clar. Pray, good cousin, explain yourself.

Ran. Good cousin! she has it. [*Aside.*] Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before——

Clar. Before what?—I'm frightened out of my wits!

Ran. Not that Frankly cared threehalfpence for the girl.

Clar. But there was no mischief done, I hope?

Ran. Pho! a slight scratch: nothing at all, as the surgeon said; though he was but a queer-looking son of a bitch of a surgeon, neither.

Clar. Why, he should have the best that can be found in London.

Ran. Ay, indeed, so he should; that was what I was going for when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here.

Clar. I keep you here! For Heaven's sake, be gone.

Ran. Your tea is a damned while a-coming.

Clar. You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

Ran. Nay; one dish.

Clar. No, positively you shall not stay.

Ran. Your commands are absolute, madam. [*Going.*

Clar. Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame.

Ran. [*Returns.*] But I beg ten thousand pardons, cousin, that I should forget——

Clar. Forget what?

Ran. Forget to salute you.

Clar. Pshaw! how can you trifle at such a time as this?

Ran. A trifle! wrong not your beauty.

Clar. Lord, how teasing you are. There.

Ran. [*Kisses her.*] Poor thing; how uneasy she is! Nay, no ceremony; you shall not stir a step with me.

Clar. I do not intend it. This is downright provoking! [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in MR. STRICTLAND'S *House.*

MR. *and* MRS. STRICTLAND *discovered; she weeping, and he writing.*

Mrs. Strict. Heigho!

Strict. What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, madam? You have yourself agreed to a maintenance; and a maintenance no duchess need be ashamed of.

Mrs. Strict. But the extremities of provocation that drove me to that agreement——

Strict. Were the effect of your own follies. Why do you disturb me? [*Writes on.*

Mrs. Strict. I would not, willingly, give you a moment's uneasiness. I but desire a fair and equal hearing: and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me: discard me to the world and its malicious tongues.

Strict. What was it you said?—Damn this pen!

Mrs. Strict. I say, Mr. Strictland, I would only—

Strict. You would only——You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour—I am innocent: and when I showed you the letter I had taken from your maid, what was then your poor evasion—but that it was to Clarinda, and you were innocent?

Mrs. Strict. Heaven knows I am innocent.

Strict. But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your—But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concerns with? Here, madam, is your fate—a letter to your brother in the country.

Mrs. Strict. Sir—

Strict. I have told him what a sister he is to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

Mrs. Strict. Then my ruin is complete. My brother!

Strict. I must vindicate my own honour, else what will the world say?

Mrs. Strict. That brother was my only hope, my only ground of patience. In his retirement I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept; till, by some happy means, you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

Strict. Retirement! pretty soul! no, no: that face was never made for retirement; it is another sort of retiring you are fittest for. Ha! hark! What's that? [*A knocking at the Door.*] Two gentle taps—and why but two?—was that the signal, madam? Stir not, on your life.

Mrs. Strict. Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world!

[*Aside.*

Strict. I will have no signs, no items, no hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste, I find. [*Opens the Door, and enter* TESTER.] Tester! Why did not you come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me!

Test. Lard, sir! what do you strike me for? my mistress ordered me never to come in where she was, without first knocking at the door.

Strict. Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

Mrs. Strict. Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him? [*Aside.*

Test. Sir, here is a letter.

Strict. To my wife?

Test. No, sir, to you. The servant waits below.

Strict. Art sure it is a servant?

Test. Sir! [*Staring.*] It is Mr. Buckle, sir.

Strict. I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read. [*Reads to himself.*

SIR,

We cannot bear to reflect that Mrs. Strictland may possibly be ruined in your esteem, and in the voice of the world, only by the confusion which our affairs have made in your family, without offering all within our power to clear the misunderstanding between you. If you will give yourself the trouble but to step to Mr. Meggot's, where all parties will be, we doubt not but we can entirely satisfy your most flagrant suspicions, to the honour of Mrs. Strictland, and the quiet of your lives. JACINTHA; JOHN BELLAMY.

Hey! here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair.—[*Exit* TESTER.] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances; it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends.

[*Exit* MR. STRICTLAND.

Mrs. Strict. Gone, so abruptly! What can that letter be about? no matter; there is no way left to make us easy but by my disgrace—and I must learn to suffer; time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Mrs. Bellamy, madam, (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr. Strictland to Mr. Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

Mrs. Strict. But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

Luc. I have been with them, madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady so ill treated.

Mrs. Strict. I am, indeed, Lucetta, ill treated: but I hope this day will be the last of it.

Luc. Madam Clarinda and Mr. Frankly will be there: and the young gentleman, madam, who was with you in this room last night.

Mrs. Strict. Ha! if he is there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

Luc. Dear lady, let me call a chair.

Mrs. Strict. I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in JACK MEGGOT'S *House.*

Enter FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, *and* JACK MEGGOT.

Frank. Oh, Ranger, this is news indeed! your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

Ran. I have done the business for you: I tell you she's your own. She loves you. I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promised me, I fix her yours directly.

Jac. Ay, ay, Mr. Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

Frank. Most willingly: but remember, dear lady, I have more than life at stake.

Jac. Away, then, into the next room; for she is this instant coming hither.

Frank. Hither! you surprise me more and more.

Jac. Here is a message from her, by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

Ran. Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure you.

Frank. Let me hug thee; though I know not how to believe it.

Ran. Pshaw! pr'ythee don't stifle me!

Meg. Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

Ran. But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly as I have for Bellamy; and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr. Buckle; and what have you to propose?

Enter BUCKLE.

Buckle. A lady, madam, in a chair, says her name is Clarinda.

Jac. Desire her to walk up.

Bel. How could you let her wait? [*Exit* BUCKLE.] You must excuse him, madam; Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

Jac. Away, away, Mr. Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal.—[*Exit* FRANKLY.] We make very free with your house, Mr. Meggot.

Meg. Oh, you could not oblige me more.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Dear Mrs. Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy, and ask your pardon, all in a breath. I know not what to say; I am quite ashamed of my last night's behaviour.

Jac. Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well; all is over and forgot. Mr. Bellamy—— [*Salute.*

Clar. I wish you joy, sir, with all my heart; and

should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

Bel. Madam, I am obliged to you.

Clar. I see nothing of Mr. Frankly! my mind misgives me. [*Aside.*

Ran. And so, you came hither purely out of friendship, good nature, and humility?

Clar. Purely.

Ran. To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation?

Clar. Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

Meg. The most so of any thing in life, I think.

Ran. A very whimsical business for so fine a lady, and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin.

Jac. Never, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shows in delivering it.

Clar. Concern! Lard, well, I protest you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind, that brightens conversation strangely.

Jac. I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for as you are, my dear, you are horribly *chagriné.*

Ran. But with a little of our help, madam, the lady may recover, and be very good company.

Clar. Hum! What does he mean, Mr. Bellamy?

Bel. Ask him, madam.

Clar. Indeed I shall not give myself the trouble.

Jac. Then you know what he means.

Clar. Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

Jac. It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

Enter BUCKLE, *and whispers* MEGGOT.

Meg. Very well.—Desire him to walk into the parlour.—Madam, the gentleman is below.

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